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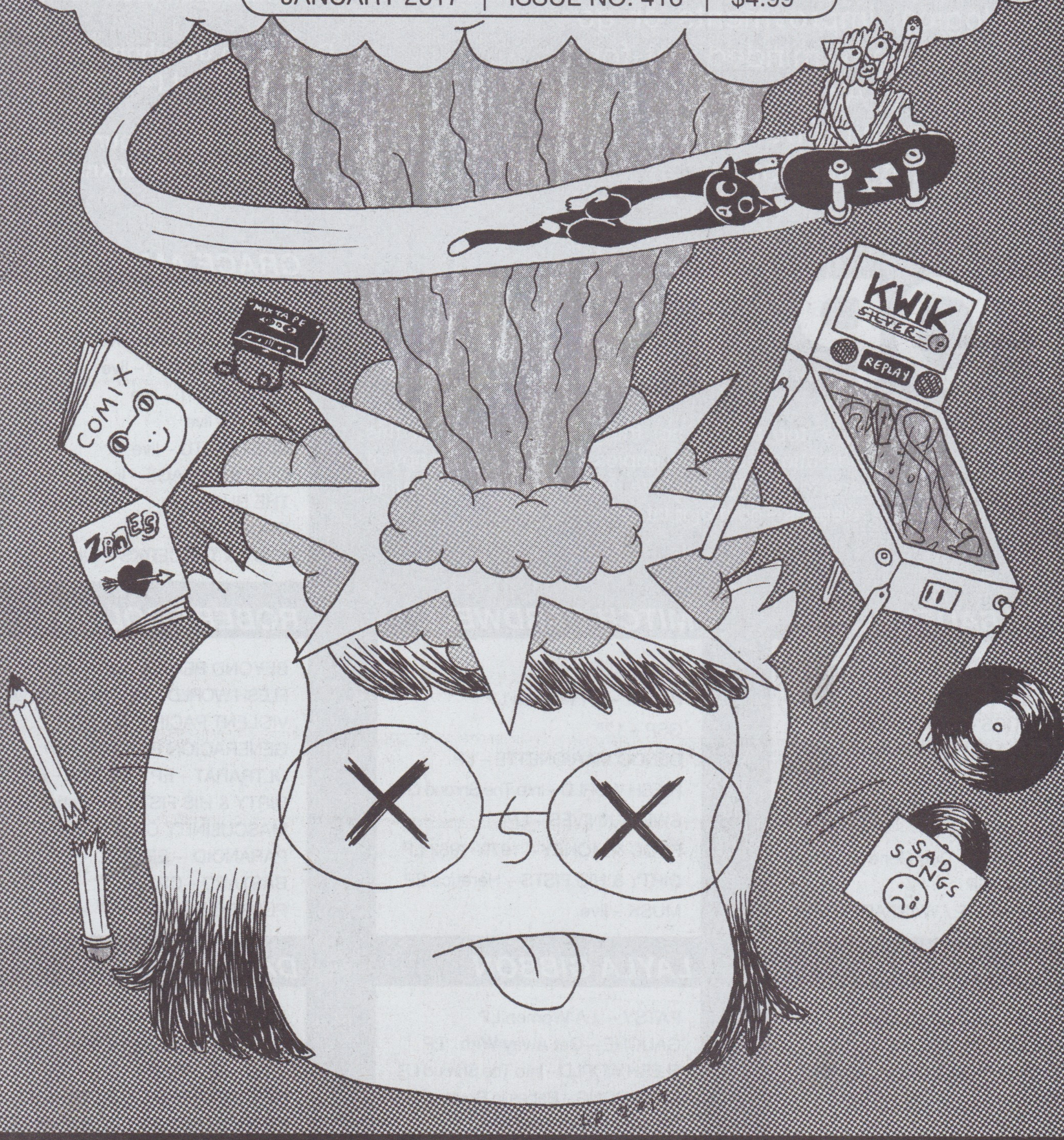
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Send interviews, articles, scene reports, photos, and ads to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

Call us on the phone between 10AM and 10PM PST at (415) 923-9814.

More information at our website: maximumrocknroll.com

TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

GRACE AMBROSE

MISS LADY – live
KARGER TRAUM – live
SHAPE SHIFTER – live
ULTRALIGHT – live
ELIX-R – live
NOSFERATU – live
CHRONOPHAGE – live
THE BUG – live
DRUJ – live
JUDY & THE JERKS – live

MATT BADENHOP

BORIS DZANECK – LP
DENDÖ MARIONETTE – LP
DIANETICS – Book Learned EP
DIRTY & HIS FISTS – Heretics EP
GSP – 12”
PATSY – LA Women LP
ÖTZI – Ghosts LP
TOUT SUITE – Dog Gone Blues EP
TROIKA – EP
UPSET NOISE / WARFARE – Split

MITCH CARDWELL

DINOSAURS – LP
PATSY – LA Women LP
GSP – 12”
DENDÖ MARIONETTE – LP
FLESH WORLD – Into The Shroud LP
SWEET KNIVES – LP
FOOD & MONEY – 1979–1982 LP
DIRTY & HIS FISTS – Heretics EP
MUSK – live

ROBERT COLLINS

BEYOND PEACE – Old Crop EP
FLESH WORLD – Into The Shroud LP
VIOLENT PACIFISTS – CDR
GENERACIÓN BASURA – EP
ULTRARAT – EP / TROIKA – EP
DIRTY & HIS FISTS – Heretics EP
MASCULINITY CRISIS – CDR
PARANOID – EP / EEL – 12”
BASTÄRD – CS
PLASTIC TONES – 12” + CS

JOAN DETORO

PATSY – LA Women LP
DENDÖ MARIONETTE – LP
BEYOND PEACE – Old Crop EP
GSP – 12”
EEL – 12”
DIRTY & HIS FISTS – Heretics EP
DIANETICS – Book Learned EP
GAUCHE – Get Away With... LP
NEO NEOS – EP
DEAD MOON – forever

LAYLA GIBBON

PATSY – LA Women LP
GAUCHE – Get Away With.. LP
FLESH WORLD – Into The Shroud LP
MR. WRONG – Babes in Boyland LP
DENDÖ MARIONETTE – LP
NEO NEOS – EP
SWEET KNIVES – LP
TECHNYCOLOR – LP
THE DINOSAURS – LP
NO MEN – Cut EP

DAN GOETZ

NO NEGATIVE – 45
GAUCHE – Get Away With... LP
ÖTZI – Ghosts LP
BEYOND PEACE – Old Crop EP
DIRTY & HIS FISTS – Heretics EP
DIANETICS – Book Learned EP
HEAVY LIDS – 45
TECHNYCOLOR – LP
RADIATION RISKS – flexi
GSP – 12”

GREG HARVESTER

DENDÖ MARIONETTE – LP
SQUISHERS – LP
GSP – 12"
MR. WRONG – Babes In Boyland LP
THE HUSSY – I See Just Fine EP
PATSY – LA Women LP
BAD BOYFRIENDS – 45 and live
ÖTZI – Ghosts LP
FLESH WORLD – Into The Shroud LP
DEAD MOON – forever

RAY LUJAN

BIG HUGE – Cruel World LP
CUSTODY – Blistered Soul 45
GSP – 12" / DIE TUNNEL – EP
HORROR SECTION – EP
MR. WRONG – Babes In Boyland LP
NERVOUS TWITCH – EP
ÖTZI – Ghosts LP / THE TOXICS – LP
PLASTIC TONES – 12"
PLEASE STOP! – EP
IRON CHIC – live

FRED SCHRUNK

GSP – 12"
ÖTZI – Ghosts LP
SQUISHERS – LP
PATSY – LA Women LP
FLESH WORLD – Into The Shroud LP
MR. WRONG – Babes In Boyland LP
DENDÖ MARIONETTE – LP
V/A – Lasst Die Alten Sterben
PLEASE STOP – EP
GENERACIÓN BASURA – EP

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BIG HUGE – Cruel World LP
NERVOUS TWITCH – EP
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LES LULLIES – Don't Look Twice EP
THE HUSSY – I See Just Fine EP
BAD BOYFRIENDS – 45
JULLIETTE SEIZURE AND THE TREMOR DOLLS – Seizure Salad LP
PATSY – LA Women LP
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MISS LADY – live
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CHRONOPHAGE – live
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SUPER STUPIDS HIGH ON HEXAVALENT CHROMIUM – live
INVERTS – live
GAUCHE – Get Away With... LP
PATSY – LA Women LP
DENDÖ MARIONETTE – LP

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This is a contributor-driven magazine. We need help writing reviews, editing, doing layouts, processing mail, maintaining our archive, and more.

Wanna be a shitworker?
Write mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

CAROLYN KEDDY

PROTO IDIOT – LP
SWEET KNIVES – LP
MR. WRONG – Babes In Boyland LP
PATSY – LA Women LP
DIANETICS – Book Learned EP
NEO NEOS – EP
NO MEN – Cut EP
ENGINE SUMMER – Trophy Kids LP
FLESH WORLD – Into The Shroud LP
FOOD & MONEY – 1979–1982 LP

ROTTEN RON READY

GLORIOUS? – EP
EEL – 12"
BEYOND PEACE – Old Crop EP
PATSY – LA WOMEN LP
DENDÖ MARIONETTE – LP
ULTRARAT – EP
FLESH WORLD – Into The Shroud LP
PARANOID – EP + LP
V/A – Killed By Meth #2 LP
SIDE EFFECTS – More To Fear 12"

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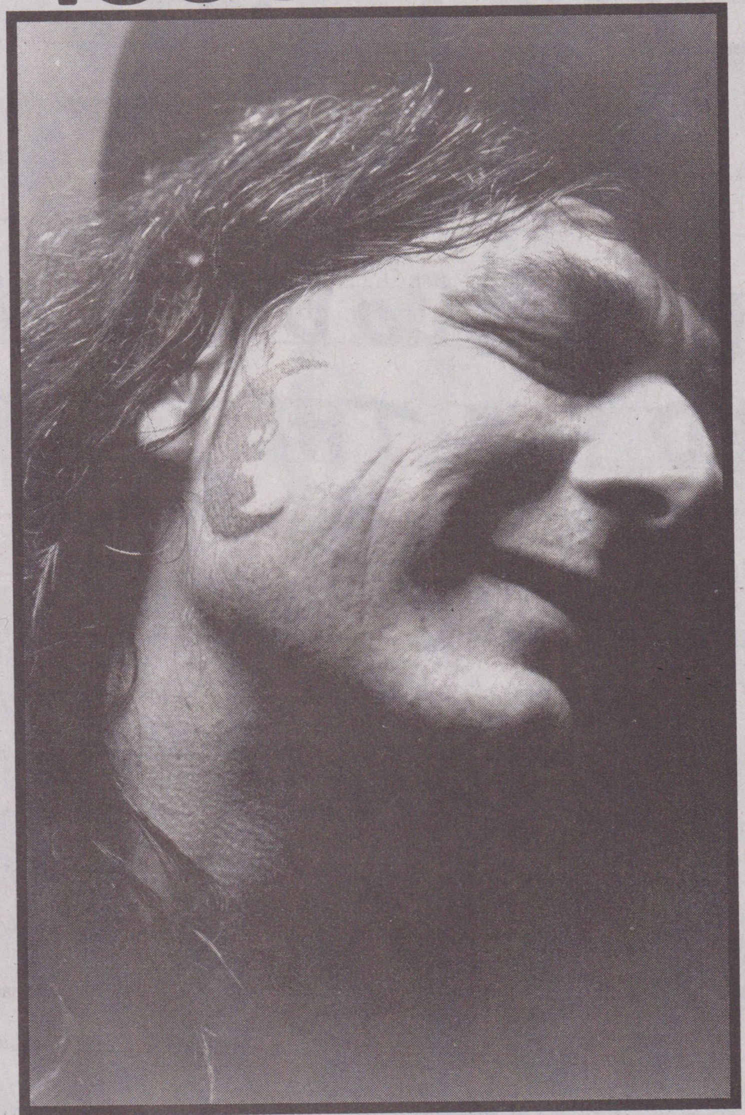

Fred Cole. Photo by Eric Geevers

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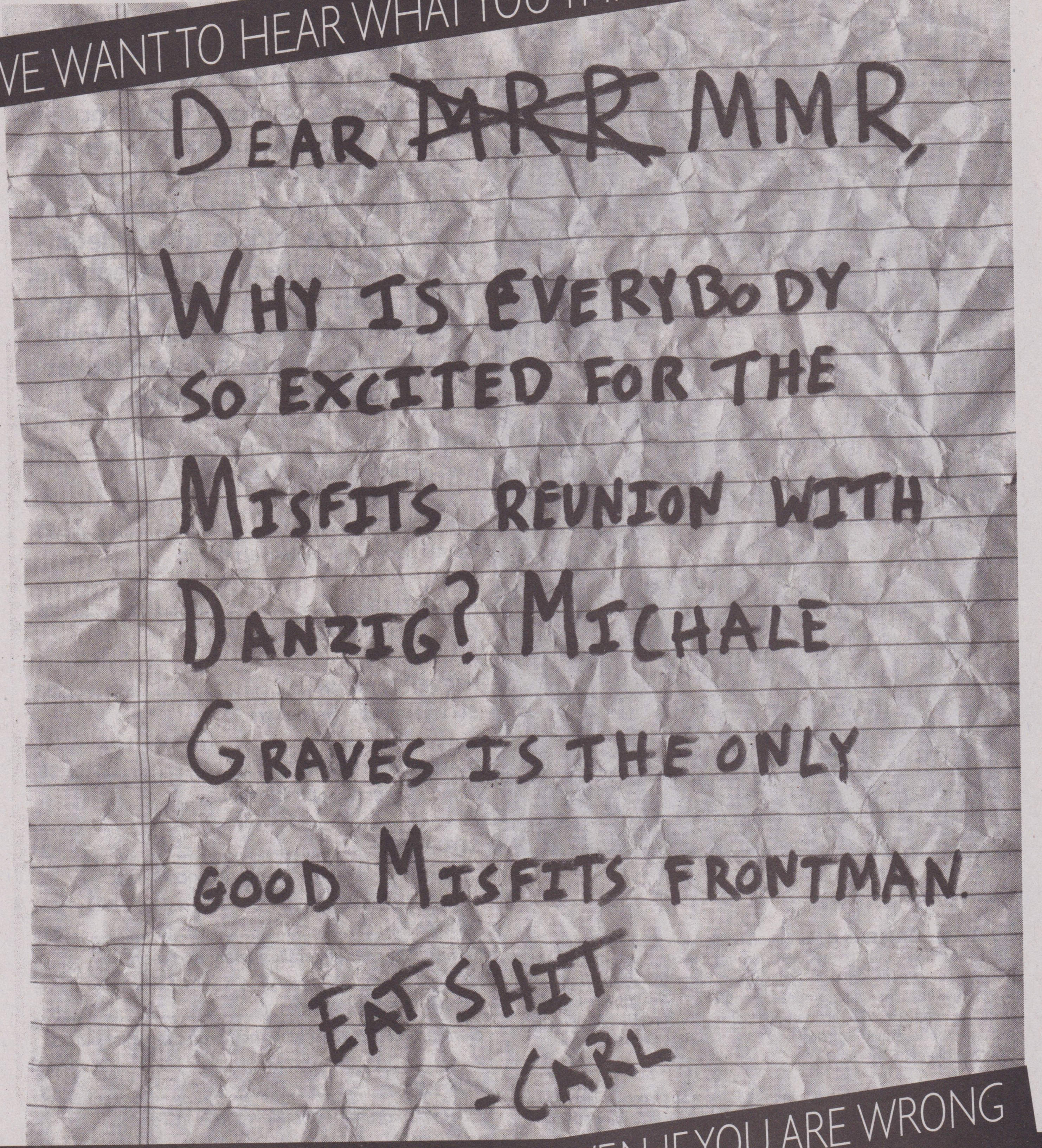

DEAR ~~MRR~~ MMR,

WHY IS EVERYBODY SO EXCITED FOR THE MISFITS REUNION WITH DANZIG? MICHALE GRAVES IS THE ONLY GOOD MISFITS FRONTMAN.

EAT SHIT
-CARL

...EVEN IF YOU ARE WRONG

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LETTERS

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Hey everyone! Charlie here with a little scene report from Santiago, Chile. Things are pretty wild, as usual. I've been lucky enough to play various shows alongside some really cool bands in various venues. You learn a lot that way. I've met a lot of cool people. There's been a lot of shows recently, even on the same day!

One of my favorite new bands is La Crisis Mundial, a post-hardcore band that mixes the groove of bands like Gang of Four and the rhythms and melodies of *In-Casino-Out* era At The Drive-In. While those are not new sounds, their approach is really fresh and something I think this scene needed in some way. The drummer is crazy, a very good player. Punk should take many forms and they are doing it perfectly. They have members from other bands, like ZAT (a band that used to be based on Buenos Aires, Argentina), Viejo En Bici, and Pato Patín. The bass player from ZAT also plays in Manual De Combate, a very raw and noisy punk duo of only bass and drums that's very incredible and original. And very political, something that's always nice. They are going to Europe on tour! The drummer also plays on Bosque, an Envy-worship band that's awesome, full of soundscapes and eerie melodies

There are other bands that are just great such as La Última Isla who play a sort of indie / twee with a punk approach in their rhythm and ethos. They play a very psychedelic krautrock-like intro live that's amazing! They have two releases on Bandcamp that you can check out. The last one is on tape via Aporía Ediciones. The guitar player also plays in NxMxA, who perform '80s trashcore-skatepunk done right. There's also a band that decided to rescue the sounds of the famous DC Revolution Summer, Yggdrasil. In the guitar melodies you not only hear Rites of Spring, there's also a little Television feeling and a great love for the '60s rock. I found them appealing because in Desaparición, the band where I play, we also really like the sounds coming from Dischord Records in the late '80's and '90s, but without forgetting stuff like SST and Touch and Go. We normally play in places like Bar Uno, Espacio 56, and Casa Animal. There are more venues, but not that many. Still, people go and have fun. We manage to make things work that way.

Recently I also saw a band called ItaloNolli. They sounded like they really love Jerry's Kids and the Germs—that kind of dirty and desperate hardcore. The local band Nervios play in a similar style but with a different energy. However it's not something you can feel on their record. That's the feeling that I get from a lot of these bands and I love it. Nothing beats the live experience! Being there, feeling the energy, the words being spit on your face. Here are some other bands that are awesome live: Daggas, Lío, and Deceso Por Causa Desconocida. All of those bands are formed by young punks and have records on Tobi Records, one of my favorite DIY labels from here. Daggas is dark and have a vibe that is similar to Gag or early Institute. Deces Por Causa Desconocido is pure Japanese madness—Balzac, Kuro, a bit of Zouo. Lío is more on the powerviolence side of trashcore, with influences of bands like Point of Few. The three of them are incredible and raw.

There's a lot to hear around here. And this is just Santiago! I know in places like Concepción, Talca, Valparaíso and many more are killer bands like Rehusar, Desperfecto, Babyshico, Dumo, Los Últimos Días, Cállate, Maldecir, La Traición De La Polvora, Quiebre, etc. I saw a lot of them on a festival called Furia Festival that's done on Talca. Furia featured a lot of bands from around the country, records, shirts, fanzines, workshops, etc. A truly great experience for anyone.

A complete list of all the bands would be endless! But be sure, I'll be writing again. If anyone has any questions or whatnot about punk in Chile, if your band wants to tour here or anything else, really, I can be reached here: cmvasquez94@gmail.com.

Do you feel that your hometown / state / province / country does not get enough representation in Maximum Rocknroll*? Know of some killer venues and bands that we don't feature often enough? Write to us! Send in a two to five thousand word scene report along with plenty of high resolution photos to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Submission does not guarantee publication.*

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We want some new columnists to write about Hardcore with a capital H, DIY metal, and garage rock, as well as writers from South and Central America, the UK, and Southeast Asia. For consideration, send a sample column and a list of three topics you'd cover in future columns.

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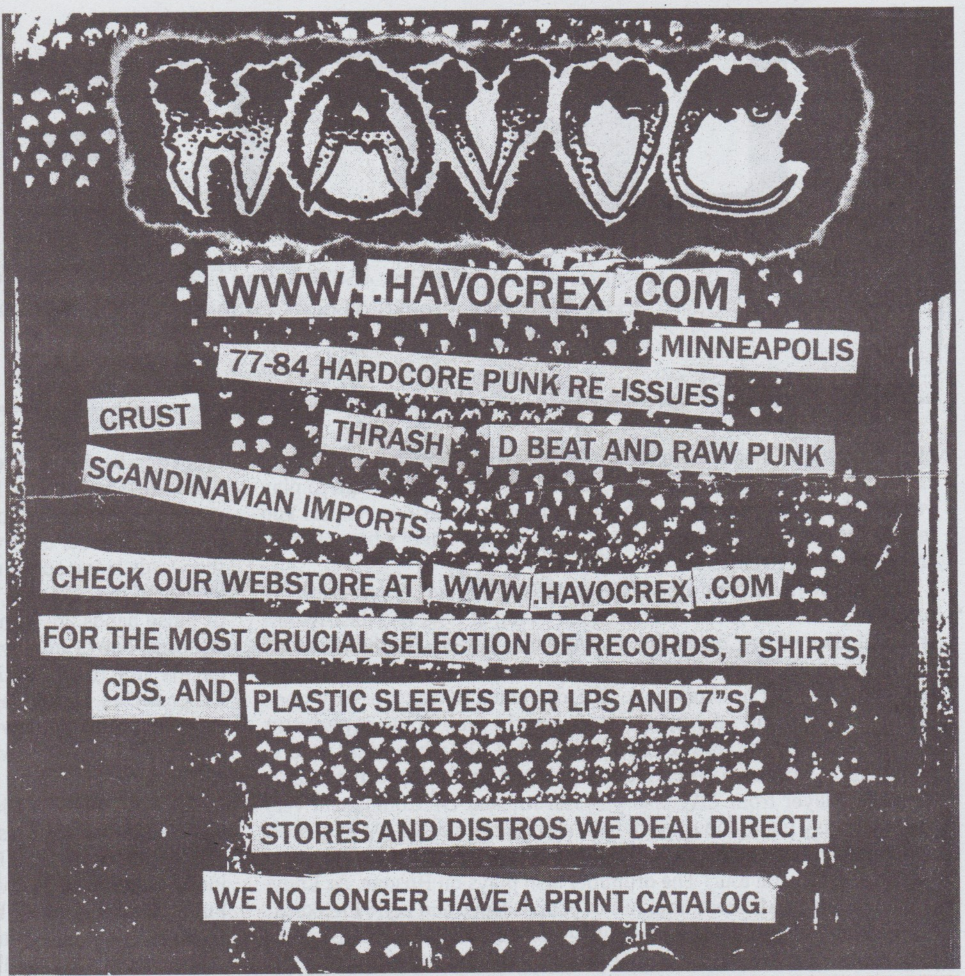

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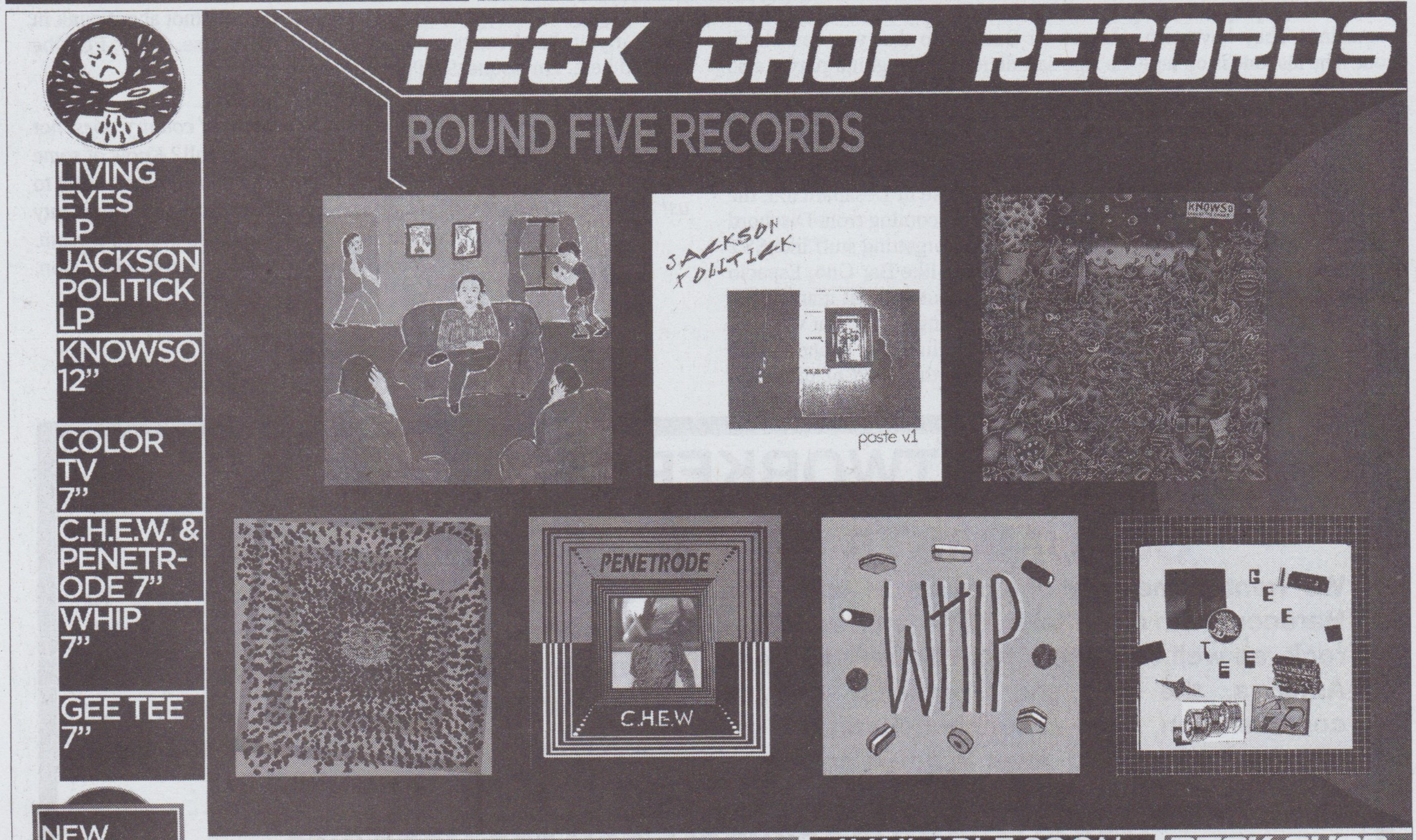

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E. CONNER

Trauma the parasitic twin.

Beverly Buchanan's recurring shack sculptures vacillate from folky and colorful toy-like[1] objects to foreboding burned out hulls. In a photograph postcard called *Out of Control* from 1991, Buchanan burns handmade models of shacks in her backyard in a wheelbarrow. Pictured in the documentation, she is leaning over the wheelbarrow and her hand is obscured by a giant flame that might as well have sprung straight from her. A trio of burned out shacks is a piece called *Three Families (A Memorial Piece with Scars),* 1989. The accompanied statement reads: LIKE BURNT CLOTHING, REMAINS CARRY THE SMELL OF DANGER, PAST AND PRESENT COVERING OR PATCHING (houses or garments) DOES NOT REMOVE THE MEMORY. THESE THREE SCULPTURES AFTER BEING PAINTED,WERE SET ON FIRE AND EXTINGUISHED BY FRIENDS. THESE SHACKS ARE A METAPHOR FOR WHAT THEN, as NOW, WAS A TACTIC FOR ENFORCED DESPAIR. DESPAIR FROM WITHOUT. THOSE OF US UP IN GREENSBORO IN 1961-62 FACED A DIFFERENT FORCE. INSTEAD OF FIRE AND BLOOD, THERE WAS WOOD,BATS WITH NAILS SUNK INTO FLESH. THERE WAS BLOOD AND FLESH, AND WOOD. THESE ARE A TRIBUTE TO THE STILL STRONG SPIRIT AND TO MEMORIES OF THAT SPIRIT IN SPITE OF BLOOD AND FLESH AND WOOD AND FIRE.

Buchanan's shack pieces speak to the multitudes of tragedy amongst the daily functions of community. They carry titles like *South Florida Hurricane Survivor – Spirit Doctor's House, Church of the Oldest Midwife in Harnett Co., NC.,*and *Before the Rosenwald School: For my Grandmother.* In addition to the sculptures, Buchanan produced many pastel and paper renderings of shacks. In one glued below a drawing of a shack with boarded up windows is a typewritten piece of paper that reads "I BELIEVE THE WHOLE WORLD IS DESCENDED FROM SHACKS"

Buchanan's other sculptural work series is on the other side of the living breathing community of shacks. Large oblique stone works sometimes installed alongside actual ruins, in marshes, across Georgia, North Carolina and Florida. Her public, environmental, and human focused work can not be divorced from her background and degree in Public Health. She graduated in 1962 from Bennett College in Greensboro, NC. with a bachelor of science degree in medical technology and went on to get two degrees from Columbia University in Public Health and Parasitology.

In Greensboro 1960, were some of the most pivotal sit-ins organized by SNCC and other groups that fomented the movement of non-violence resistance tactics that quickly spread across the southern states. Less than 20 years later, despite the almost immediate social success of the lunch counter sit-ins in the community of Greensboro,[2] reactionary violence against anti-racism again seized the community.

In 1979 during a Communist Workers Party anti-Klan rally the KKK showed up and shot and killed 5 people and over 12 people were wounded. Subsequent criminal cases proved that the police and the city of Greensboro had aided and abetted the Klansmen through infiltration and encouraged them to show up armed. While there were plenty of witnesses and even recorded film footage all six of the white supremacists arrested and charged were acquitted by all white juries. Frazier Glenn Miller Jr., a renowned and public Klansman and FBI informant, publicly admits to being a part of the Klan attack in Greensboro. In 2014 he shot and killed three people at a Kansas Jewish Community Center and retirement community.

What is this world that wants a perfect victim?

Right now the air outside is toxic. Fires to the north of us burn up whole neighborhoods, weed farms, and ridgelines across Sonoma, Mendocino, Napa and more. For those of us who lost 36 friends last years the smell of smoke wakes us up in the middle of the night and then hovers over us like a ghost. My friend El from Texas is visiting. She brings me a bag of pecans her friend collected and a N95 respirator mask left over from doing relief work in our mutual hometown. The same mask is recommended to filter out both toxic mold and smoke. 2018 aesthetics, I guess.

Word about the aftermath of the storm seeks their way out via texts from friends, *Democracy Now!* headlines, and other short pieces published on leftist media. M, my new friend, hands me a stack of zines from Houston to take almost everytime I see them. The first time we hung out they gave me *Timelines #1,* a short zine written by people working with West St. Recovery in Houston. West St. began as nothing more than part of the ad hoc coalitions of residents working to do the early recovery, rescue, and relief efforts that the institutional crisis response could and would not.

As the title suggests the zine presents itself as a timeline that chunks days together in the way that they are experienced. Crisis creates a blur in temporality and you feel close to the conjuncture when reading. While *Timelines* could be regarded as a strategic analysis of *what works* I worked my way through the zine considering that it's also a precious and painful document of large scale trauma. The people who force a reminder that humanity is something that automatically responds to vulnerability with cruelty and domination have no place in this world. Leah and the other's who contributed to *Timelines* leave us with more questions than answers.

Why don't the public libraries have fliers about how to apply for FEMA, how to rid your house of mold, or the schedule for when people can apply for disaster food stamps?

Why does the city get to decide when you're allowed to autonomously organize and when it's against the law?

How close does the city sleep with the real estate investors that have been waiting for such an opportunity?

What happens when we do the job the government professes it is paid to do without its support?

Ending with the promise "To Try. To fail better."

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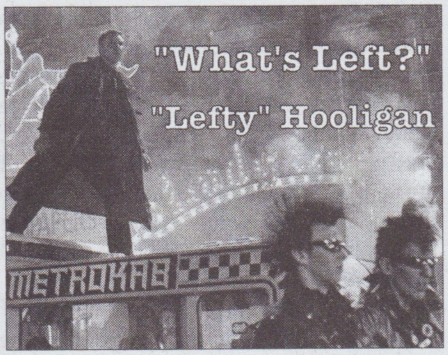
[1] Walter Benjamin, the noted weed smoker and fan of handmade children's toys says this on children and toys "If we look beyond the

question of materials and glance at the child playing, we may speak of an antinomian relationship...no one is more chaste in the use of materials than children: a bit of wood, a pine cone, a small stone—however unified and unambiguous the material is, the more it seems to embrace the possibility of a multitude of figures of the most varied sort." The obvious comparison to the simple formulaic almost dogmatic structures of punk and hardcore that still flourish with new sounds within their confines must be made here.

[2] The sit-ins in Greensboro began February 1, 1960 and by the end of the month the lunch counter at the S.H. Kress store was integrated.



Assassinate the President!
—GG Allin, crooner

It was spring, 1980. We were organizing a Students for Peace benefit at the Spirit Club. The Spirit Club was a dive bar's dive bar in San Diego. SfP started at UCSD soon after Jimmy Carter reinstated draft registration in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

We booked the club for an evening early in the week and agreed to pay the bar's minimum for the night. As I recall, we had four bands play and barely broke even. A competent ska / 2-tone quartet named Fire opened with danceable beats and solid political lyrics. We'd heard they were affiliated with the ultra-Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party, more specifically its youth auxiliary, the Revolutionary Communist Youth Brigade. The RCP had a long history of—and an interest in—youth organizing, and they used the RCYB to cultivate young recruits as well as a street presence. It was early in the evening, the attendance was sparse, so we had time to chat with the band.

Except for the drummer, they were all working musicians with experience and again, except for the drummer, they all seemed a little too old to be called "youth." Originally called Prairie Fire, they had played aggressive punk rock up until becoming a ska band. It was clear that both the name change and change in musical style were not due solely to personal tastes or wanting to be more commercial. Their political milieu had dictated it. Someone in SfP who had heard them before asked about a song, "Overthrow The Government," they did in their punk incarnation. The band demurred, said they no longer played the song, and inferred that it was not in their repertoire because it was not politically correct per the RCP. We kept pestering them, shouting requests for the song between numbers, demanding they play it. After some hesitation, they relented and played a hardcore "Overthrow The Government."

The First Amendment to the Constitution prevents government from passing laws that prohibit free speech, but no such prohibition applies to a private club, service organization, capitalist business, Leninist vanguard party, what have you. Clearly, the "right" to free speech can be limited or curtailed by the vanguard party you belong to, but no more so than if you work for your typical capitalist corporation in these United States. I remember telling an old school San Diego leftie that our mutual friend—a member of the Maoist Communist Party, M-L, formerly called the October League—had been reassigned to a party cadre on the east coast. His take was that our mutual friend displayed party discipline and a commitment to both party building and mass organizing in making the move. I considered that our mutual friend was involved in a job relocation, an employee transfer between branch offices of a corporation, and was making a lateral career move.

And corporations can legally deny you your "right" to free speech with impunity. They can fire your ass for what you say on or off the job, make you sign non-disclosure agreements, confidentiality contracts, and codes of conduct in order to keep your ass employed, and regulate the content, manner, and timing of your speech while your ass is on the job. According to court judgments regarding labor laws, employees can legally discuss wages, hours, and working conditions, but not much else. Private workplaces are miniature totalitarian states, and the situation is little better for public employees working for the government. When speaking as private citizens, government workers may be protected so long as they are speaking out about a public concern, and speaking out doesn't interfere with doing their job. Otherwise, no "right" to free speech. But what if the public employee is also an elected public official, or is a public employee by virtue of being elected to public office?

"I hope Trump is assassinated." - Maria Chappelle-Nadal, politician: Maria Chappelle-Nadal was heavily criticized for her remarks on her Facebook post. The Secret Service investigated the Missouri Democratic State Senator, and demands were raised that she resign. The Democratic senator apologized but remained adamant and refused to resign, so the Republican-controlled Missouri Senate censured her. The vote was just shy of the two-thirds needed to remove the senator from office. Compare this to what happened to Michigan truck driver James Anthony Jackson when he said of Trump: "I am going to blow white brains out the fuck out his motherfucking head." He was investigated by the Secret Service, who then arrested and charged Jackson for threatening to assassinate the president of the United States, which is a felony punishable by up to five years in prison.

Congress may be prohibited from making any law abridging freedom of speech, but the government can certainly define what "freedom of speech" legally means. Credible threats are not considered freedom of speech, with federal, state, and local governments universally defining the use of threats of violence as the assault part of "assault and battery" laws. Similarly disorderly conduct, disturbing the peace, and breach of public order are all considered crimes, not free speech. So government does have the legal right to prohibit the content of speech if it is deemed threatening and the manner of speech if it is deemed disruptive.

Even with genuine free speech, the US Supreme Court has repeatedly ruled that local, state, and federal governments can reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of individual expression. Time, place, and manner restrictions "accommodate public convenience and promote order by regulating traffic flow, preserving property interests, conserving the environment, and protecting the administration of justice," [*West's Encyclopedia of American Law*, 2nd ed.] and therefore are not considered an abridgment of freedom of speech.

#assassinatetrump - hashtag: In a time of social media and instant global digital communication however—when alt.right idiots threaten anti-fascists with "helicopter rides" and conspiracy wingnuts threaten victims of mass shootings with mayhem, rape, and murder for being "false flag" crisis actors—all of this seems moot. In fact, the "right" to free speech is not guaranteed by god, natural law, the constitution, legislation, custom, morality, or our sense of fairness. That right, any right, is guaranteed solely by our individual and collective power to deny or enforce it. Even then, the "right" to free speech doesn't mean that anyone else has to listen to your bullshit, or host you while you share it, or shield you from criticism or consequences, or prevent you from being boycotted, your events cancelled, or banned from some internet community (to quote a popular XKCD comic). This has little

to do with Karl Popper’s so-called “tolerance paradox.” The “right” to free speech is a fight for power, pure and simple.

So, consider the hashtag #assassinatetrump. Social media forces its users to participate in a bit of compulsory free speech through the system of hashtags to flag posts and tweets as part of a single meta-conversation. By using #assassinatetrump, people for or against the assassination of Trump, or people just making a point or a joke, are engaged in a *de facto* free speech fight. No doubt the FBI has bots applying internet algorithms to search out the content behind any and all #assassinatetrump hashtags to determine whether or not they pose a threat. And be prepared for when the Secret Service breaks down the door of someone using the hashtag to actually threaten to assassinate Trump, violating all sorts of other rights and freedoms in the process. But the hashtag #assassinatetrump is a statement all by itself, simultaneously an assertion of free speech and a battle over it.

Use #assassinatetrump at your own risk.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA

Personal blog: gamatiasz.wordpress.com
Political blog: leftyhooligan.wordpress.com
Facebook page: facebook.com/GAMatiasz
Writer Facebook page: facebook.com/GA-Matiasz-1729198467311786
Publishing Facebook page: facebook.com/62-Mile-Press-190746624637105
Publishing website: 62milepress.com

FELIX HAVOC
FIN DE SIECLE ANGST

Last month I talked about Dutch and Belgian punk comps. Now we dig deeper into Dutch punk vinyl. Holland’s scene got going early, taking cues from the UK punk explosion and, like most European countries, drawing on an existing pub rock scene. One area where Holland excelled was radical political post-punk, notably the EX and the RONDOS. Some might object, but I don’t really feel like there is a Dutch punk sound. If there is, I might say it’s that political post-punk like the aforementioned bands, although you could say their sound owes a lot to CRASS, GANG OF FOUR, and other UK bands.

The VOPOS formed in the late ’70’s and, presumably, took their name from the sinister East German border police. They started out in the shadow of contemporary UK punk and put out an excellent 7” in 1980, *I’m so Glad the King is Dead,* which also features the ’77 punk rager “Menten.” The 7” kind of reminds me of MENACE especially as it sounds so tough and angry. In 1981, they followed up this killer 7” with the LP *Dead Entertainment*. This LP is powerful and energetic, and does a really good job of straddling the sound of what we would now call first and second wave punk. That is to say, some songs are moving to a more UK82 sound. The VOPOs later went metal or hard rock, and I willingly remain ignorant of this material.

The RONDOS were a really political, agitational, and arty post-punk/punk band formed in the late ’70’s. According to the jacket of their LP *Red Attack* they were originally part of a “Red Rock” collective of bands and their LP features a red triangle. So get ready for some left wing agitation. Most of their sound is driving, droning bass and drums with chanted vocals. When bands like this channel their protest and energy into short fast punk songs it’s great; when they venture off into artistic post-punk flights of experimental fantasy it’s aggravating; you get both styles with this band. I’d say they mix even parts of CRASS, FLUX, POISON GIRLS, GANG OF FOUR, and MEKONS. They put out a split 7” with the RAILBIRDS, the aforementioned *Red Attack* LP, and a 7” *Which Side Will You Be On?* which features Mao on the cover, someone whose side I would not want to be on. I think given how popular angular and discordant post-punk is these days, lots of people would like this band.

The EX started out playing pretty straightforward punk rock. Their first 7” *All Corpses Smell The Same* reminds me of FLUX OF PINK INDIANS or ANTHRAX but they soon departed for the same cultural space as occupied by the RONDOS: GANG OF FOUR influenced post-punk. Droning bass, chanted vocals, political agitation, situationist deconstruction and the like. I stopped following this band a long time ago, but as far as I know they are still going, doing some kind of avant garde thing.

The VULTURES released one 7”, 1981’s *At Home,* and it’s a killer. Fast and furious punk in the UK82 style. While the songs are catchy and full of energy, they are also just a bit inept and rough, in the way only bands of this genre can get away with. La Vida Es Un Mus reissued this one in 2015 so it should not be hard to find.

The MIRANDAS released two 7”s, *For Promotion Only* and *Emotional Fascism,* in 1981 and 1982 respectively. The first 7” is a bit more raw, hard driving and catchy punk. The second 7” is a tad more polished, but they are both really solid.

MECANO LTD. had just one 7”, *Face Cover Face,* which was released in 1978. A two track ’77 punk banger, simplistic, aggressive, and catchy punk the way it was played in the early days, and rarely has been since. This was reissued in 2016, so catch it while you can.

BVD put out one 7” in 1980, their brand of punk is a bit more mid-tempo, reminding me a bit of DOA.

The SQUATS put out one 7” in 1981 and it manages to channel the UK sounds of BLITZ and the PARTISANS perfectly. Their *Noise Overdose* 7” is worthy of any of it’s UK cousins. The first track, “Chaos in Nijmegen,” makes me want to riot in the streets of the aforementioned picturesque Dutch town. Band photos feature: charged hair, leather, bomber jackets, beer, cigarettes, and...pinball.

DE STRAKS, like most of these bands, took a radical political stance and I would say their sound and vibe owes a lot to the EX and the RONDOS, as well as UK anarcho-punk. They had two 7”s, one from 1981 and one from 1982. The first 7” has some pretty traditional sounding punk, but most of their songs are taking on more of that post punk influence.

LULLABIES first release was a double 7” with just about an LP worth of material crammed onto its four sides. Radical punk rock, reminding me a lot of early FLUX, CRASS, and ANTHRAX. Heavy on political stance and agitation, but some of the songs seem rather simplistic. Their second 7” *Next One* has some great lo-fi punk bangers like “Cop in the Street.” One of the songs they kind of stop in the middle, have a discussion, and start it again, not sure what that’s all about, but it works. There’s a bit of that droning / chanting post-punk vibe here too, but with more anger and punk energy.

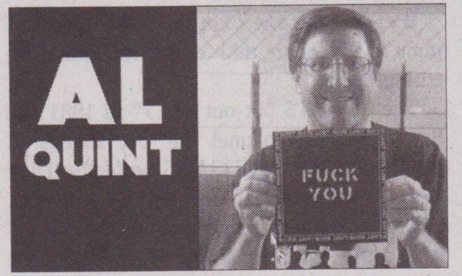
Almost all of these bands were radical politically: record covers have circled A’s, squatter symbols, and lash out at Reagan, Thatcher, war, and oppression. The SPEEDTWINS on the other hand, sound a lot more like a traditional punk / pub rock band. But even they manage to make a political statement with their 1978 single “Football Song” with the resounding chorus *“we hate football / we hate football”* Their 1978 LP, *It’s More Fun To Compete,* has some good tracks, again leaning more towards traditional rock sounds. One would speculate that these were rock veterans to jumped on the punk band wagon, but that doesn’t detract from them having some good material.

RAKKETAX put out one, self-titled, 7” in 1981 and it’s in the same tradition as early EX and RONDOS, kind of jerky and angular punk/post punk.

The METS released a 12” EP *Klik* in 1982.

I don't know much about this band, but they give me a heavy UK82 vibe.

Most of the best tracks by all these bands are on the comps I discussed last issue if you want to start digging deeper.



WHAT'S THIS SHIT CALLED THE PAGANS? MIKE HUDSON, R.I.P.

Mike Hudson, founding member of legendary (and, yes, the word legendary is applicable here) Cleveland punk band the PAGANS passed away in late October. He was 61 and had suffered bouts of poor health for a number of years, although the end apparently came quickly, due to complications from a laceration of his intestine. After having read about his antics and demons over the years, the news wasn't completely shocking to me. As writer John Petkovic (who also played in DEATH OF SAMANTHA, COBRA VERDE and GUIDED BY VOICES) wrote in his tribute on Cleveland.com, "He had more crashes than Evel Knievel, more lives than a cat."

I'm sorry to say that I didn't hear the PAGANS until around 1984, when I was trading records with my old friend Pete Wegele (aka Peter Aaron from CHROME CRANKS). Pete suggested I check them out and, from the moment he put the needle down on the record and I heard the *"1-2-3-4"* that started "What's This Shit Called Love," I was immediately hooked. It was one of those transcendent musical epiphanies that stays with you forever. And I'm only being somewhat hyperbolic! This was a rough-sounding band but buried in there were '60s rock'n'roll / garage / proto-punk touch points and their covers included the WHO, ROLLING STONES, and VELVET UNDERGROUND. It was snotty, sneering, arrogant, and insolent. In other words, punk as fuck, very much in keeping with Cleveland's reputation for sonic reduction.

The PAGANS were only together for a few years in the late '70s and their recorded output during that period consisted of four singles, including their debut, *Six and Change,* with original vocalist Robert Conn (later in DEFNICS). The band was an off and on thing after that, yielding a full-length self-titled album in '83 (aka *The Pink Album)* and there were various singles and live albums after that but, in all honesty, all you really need is a good compilation that includes the early stuff. Two on Crypt, *Shit Street,* and *Everybody Hates You,* have all the crucial swill, along with various demos and live recordings. They were released seven years apart and there's some track overlap. Songs like "Street Where Nobody Lives," "I Don't Understand," "Dead End America," and "She's A Cadaver (and I've Got To Have Her)" are raw 'n' nasty ravers.

Hudson was also an author, producing about half a dozen books, both nonfiction and fiction, as well as founding the *Niagara Falls Reporter* newspaper. His 2008 autobiography, *Diary of a Punk,* was unflinchingly honest and up front, warts and all—drugs, ripoffs, miserable touring experiences, homelessness, interpersonal squabbles, and, sadly, the death of his brother, son, and close friends. He wasn't afraid to call out people who had wronged him, such as former manager Johnny Dromette and Mark Trehus from Treehouse Records, who released several PAGANS records for which the band received little if any compensation. He also had no respect for the Cleveland rock'n'roll "establishment," i.e. the press and radio, who never paid any attention to the PAGANS when they were around.

Maybe it sounds like standard rock bio boilerplate and well-worn ground but Hudson didn't try to romanticize it in any way. He wrote that his aspiration was to be *"Mick Jagger and Jack Kerouac rolled into one."* The thing is, for all his bad-boy imagery, Jagger was a product of the art school universe; Hudson was a 10th grade dropout but carved out a journalism career in addition to a thorny, no-BS musical legacy. I still get shivers when I hear that *"1-2-3-4."*

You definitely need to have some of their music in your collection. It's prime scorch, to paraphrase what Byron Coley wrote on the back cover of the first compilation of their material, 1986's *Buried Alive* (on Treehouse). He concluded his notes with, "you're gonna burn, fuck face." Trust me, that could very well happen and you're gonna love it.

WHAT'S THIS NEW SHIT?

Seeing Boston band BANSHEE live is quite the experience...half a dozen or so (I lost count) guys playing an arsenal of guitars, bass, drums, sax, and keyboards, fronted by a vocalist doing his best to channel both Iggy and Stiv. And the music is total widescreen, kick-out-the-jams-motherfuckers psych-rock-a-rama. Their *Caw!* album is a thick 'n' heady stew. All of this is executed by members of Boston bands MALE NURSES, CASANOVAS IN HEAT, COMBAT ZONE and others. And it rocks like crazy, punk guys flying their freak flag and imbuing that kind of attitude into the fray. BANSHEE tend to stretch out on their songs—five of seven top the five minute mark. When they're on, they're on, as with the fired-up fury of "Wave To The Police," "Culture Vulture" and "Cop Caller," which fades off into noisy mayhem. Sure, it can get ponderous or hazy on occasion and I get the feeling ingesting various substances might enhance the effect. But this hits you between the ears. Get out the black light and boogie. (www.bansheemotherfuckers.com)

B.D. is the band formerly known as the BAD DADDIES (although they apparently answer to both) and *Singles Over 30* is a compilation of songs taken from various demos, 7"s, splits, etc., along with a few unreleased selections. This is their first 12" release as B.D. never did an album, although they've been prolific. It's not complete—in fact, the accompanying booklet doesn't provide info about the songs on the album but about the songs they *left off* and there are interviews with past and present members, photos and flyers. While the songs are mostly wrapped in a noisy cocoon of feedback squalls and fuzz and are mainly brief bursts of spirited, ranty, punk, it's not the whole story. Poppy touches come through and those elements are played up on songs like "We Never Will" (which has a knockout chorus hook), the more-recent "Panama Papers" and their utterly charming cover of SMOKING POPES' "Not That Kind Of Boyfriend" ("Girlfriend," on their version). Camylle can sound sweet and she can also sound pissed as all-hell. And the fury flies for the likes of "Regress" and near-epic (3 minutes!) "You Ain't Right." Many of the songs are under a minute, as they flow from one thorny composition to another, not following any set formula. If you've missed the boat on them, here's a good way to at least partially catch up. A few people have said that "underrated" should be stricken from the music critic lexicon but I'll say it anyway. (Emotional Response, jenandstew.com)

Chicagoans the BUG's *Humbug* 7" provides a relentless aural bombardment. Following a pair of demos, their first waxing is dangerous and frenetic, a cyclone-like gnarl of sputtering guitar lines and off-kilter bash. The axe-mangling for "Opinionated" will shred your brain. It comes with a booklet that includes the lyrics, artwork, and explanations behind the songs. Damn fucking straight it has a message but there aren't any slogans, just ruminations on mental health, gender and political issues. And, lest you think the political vitriol is meant for the current occupant of the White House, it's actually aimed at the previous one, as the title track is about the "hoax of hope." One can hear echoes of early DIE KREUZEN, although this is a lot more twisted-sounding and not any sort of dated relic. (IFB, ifbrecords.com; Not Normal, notnormaltapes.storenvy.com)

RASH is also from Chicago and one mean-sounding band. Face-melting hardcore that provides a loud and dark scream from the soul. That's evident on their latest 7" *Midnight Crooner* (following up their *Skinner Box* 12"). Screeching and squalling riffs underpinned by a sturdy crunch, slowing it to a pounding creepy crawl for "Tick." There's also a split where RASH is paired up with C.H.E.W., another edgy and provocative Chicago band. C.H.E.W. (which allegedly stands for Cocaine, Heroin, Ecstasy, Weed) connect with an aggressive and driving hardcore sound and also add a JESUS LIZARD-like twist for "Moral Panic." Doris' vocals exude a savage, murderous intensity. The same can actually be said for Eric from RASH's verbal emanations. That'd make for one hell of a duet, I imagine. A perfect pairing. (IFB, ifbrecords.com; Slugsalt, www.slugsaltrex.com)

With each successive release, EEL get increasingly raw. On their latest 12", *Night Parade of 100 Demons*, Jimmy Rose's vocals get buried further into the mix and the trebly guitar sounds like a buzzing hornets' nest at this point. Lyrics? Who needs to hear lyrics? They even state as much on "Always Never"—"*Lyrics are stupid / lyrics is boring...I can't remember any words / Impossible to remember.*" Is the increasing primitiveness some sort of completion backwards principle? (TUBES reference—look it up). The *modus operandi* remains the same—full-bore Japanese inspired hardcore, as well as a little ANTI-CIMEX thrown in, and topped off with noisy effects. Their *Endless Fucker* album almost sounds like pop music by comparison. A deadly sonic brainbomb. (Beach Impediment, beachimpedimentrecords.blogspot.com)

There are actually two women and two men in the MACHO BOYS and their debut, self-titled, album is a throttler. A timelessness, both in the band's direct, rough and tumble '80s-inspired hardcore punk sound and pointed lyrics, mixing thrash with a classic SoCal punk undertow. I'm not talking EpiFat shit, I'm talking about bands like the ADOLESCENTS or AGRESSION, with its driving backbeat. "Stone Cold," with its wrasslin' theme, definitely falls into that realm. And being a Bostonian, I applaud their pounding cover of DECADENCE's "Slam," from *This Is Boston, Not L.A.* I mentioned the timeless lyrical themes and that's rather a pity since the same shit that angered punks back then still remains. Yet, with the rage, there's still a warmth, a "we're all in this together" vibe. Punk as a sort of group therapy. (Neck Chop, neck-chop-records.myshopify.com)

NO SKIN are a new(ish) band from Minneapolis with Ben Crew from IN DEFENCE and DAMAGE DEPOSIT (Felix Havoc's old band). IN DEFENCE traded mainly in crossover thrash metal but NO SKIN are a different beast. Their *Paying The Fine* 12" is straight-up ripping hardcore, a mix of US influences and the occasional DIS-sertation. Anger unleashed, as Ben barks like a rabid dog and the band sounds muscular and in-your-face. From the one-two opening blast of "Knee Jerk Circle" and "Neck Deep" to floor rattlers like "White Elephant" and "Drill Pressed," NO SKIN kick up a power-packed storm. Only 100 pressed. (Give Priase, shop.givepraiserecords.com)

It's the hammer effect as OXIDANT maneuver their way through blazing speedcore/powerviolence territory on their first 7", *Deconstruct*. Perfectly executed and unrelenting. KJ howls at the top of their lungs, spewing out lyrical fragments as opposed to a verse / chorus / verse structure. Includes a cover of an early HÜSKER DÜ song, "Bricklayer," which originally appeared on *Land Speed Record*. Maybe the Hüskers were early purveyors of powerviolence. This is probably something I'd rather experience in the flesh but they do nail the sound with skilled mettle. (To Live A Lie, www.tolivealie.com)

The cover of RUT's *Attraction* 7" shows the comic strip character Nancy kicking the band's name and that fits the mood of the record. "Provoked," indeed, as the opening track with that title gets things started with a storm of feedback leading into pounding hardcore punk. Dense and thumping, guitar pyrotechnics that don't veer into wank territory, and thick bass lines. RUT are from California, although they remind me a bit of UK nasties like SNOB or FRAU. One of the people in this band also plays in ACRYLICS so you know this is music with a bone to pick with the world. (Digital Regress, digitalregress.com)

London band OWNER play some hot punk on their debut demo. The start of "Spent" makes you think it's going to be a d-beat assault but it's a feint, as the band settle into a loud, mainly mid-paced mode and they mix in a few different influences—'90s riot grrrl, even some NIRVANA riffage for "Nothing To Say." A fired-up blast, making for a strong debut. (ownerpunk.bandcamp.com)

Finally, on DAME's three song self-titled 7", they craft melodic, yet stinging '80s-inspired goth-punk. Lauren's synth isn't quite as prevalent as on their demo, creating more of an atmospheric effect, as Anna's mellifluent guitar lines come to the fore, underpinned by solid bass lines and drumming. "Hush" speeds things up to a punkier pace without losing the tuneful glow. Their demo was OK but this 7" is big leap forward. (Charm School, charmschoolrecords.bigcartel.com)

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MOM, LOOK, I'M IN A MAGAZINE!!
GUEST COLUMN
SEX PiSTOL
A
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C

I just got out of jail; I was in there for a month and I was writing a lot which reminded me that I always want to write more. Then I got out and got a couple issues of *Maximum Rocknroll* and remembered that I'd wanted to start writing a column awhile back. Seems like now is a good time to start.

Who am I? I'm a nomadic anarchist punk from Ottawa. I spend a lot of time at blockades and on the road in my veggie-oil powered school bus, known as the Mobile Resistance Unit. My focus is on anti-extraction and indigenous sovereignty struggles. I'm a militant tree-hugger. I'm a restless, antsy, compulsive organizer who's usually pissed off at people for not doing more for the movement. My goal here is not really to write about politics, because I already do that elsewhere, but to write my feelings about the world as I see it. That's what I like about the columns in *Maximum RocknRoll*—the rawness, the immediacy, the honesty. My political writing is calculated and aims to persuade; here I just want to purely express whatever's in my heart and mind at a given moment. OK, enough intro.

Let me tell you about jail. I'd been working a lot on my bus this summer and finally deemed it ready for a major road trip. A friend offered me a performer's ticket to Burning Man (I'm a fire juggler) and we made plans to go. I was stopped when I crossed the border into Michigan. I got arrested and told that I was a "fugitive from justice" and was getting extradited to Minnesota. This took me totally by surprise—I had no idea there was a warrant out for my arrest. I was arrested back in March at a protest of a Trump rally in the state capitol building in St. Paul. I was charged with disorderly conduct (a misdemeanor) and when I got out they told me that my charge was dropped. But apparently they re-filed charges two months later, much more serious charges this time: rioting, using tear gas, and "substantial bodily harm" to a cop. When I got in front of a judge in Michigan, he told me that they don't have to tell you when they put a warrant out for you. "People are harder to find when you know you're looking for them," he said. He told me that Minnesota would come to pick me up in ten business days or so.

So there I was in the St. Clair County Jail in

Port Huron, thinking *fuck me*. When I got into general population, people were working out, doing pushups and crunches and curls with a trashcan full of water. I asked if there was a weight room and a young inmate told me. "Nah, I wish. There's a pool though." Another chimed in: "Yeah, pool day's tomorrow. You better get a pool pass. Just go down and ask the guard for one." Damn! A pool! That sounded pretty good. I went down and politely asked for a pool pass. The screw looked at me dead cold and told me "You tell those guys up there to fuck off." Everyone got a good laugh out of it.

"You got me," I said, thinking that maybe this jail wasn't going to be too bad. As it turns outs, St. Clair was a pretty soft landing into jail culture. No big egos in my pod, just guys playing cards and shooting the shit. I made a friend in there who made me a cake for my birthday out of two honey buns and cocoa powder icing with skittles on top.

The saga got worse though. I had to wait 13 days to get picked up by a horrible private company called Prisoner Transportation Services (PTS). Another captive put it well: "PTS should add a D. Shit's traumatic!" They put me in the back of a van and we went on a tour of many, many jails, picking up people and dropping people off as we went. This was the worst part of my month being incarcerated. I was stuck in the back of a van with seven other men with wrists and ankles shackled. It was hot, hard to breathe, damn near impossible to sleep, and it was up to 12 hours between bathroom breaks. What's worse, the van wasn't getting me any closer to where I was going, and the itinerary kept changing. I started thinking that it was a deliberate torture tactic like the Frequent Flyer program at Guantanamo. After 48 hours in the van, I was an hour away from where I started. Eventually they dropped me off in *Ala-fucking-bama*, of all places. *What-in-the-actual-fuck*. I was told I would be picked up when there was a van driving Northwest.

My cellmate was a meth-head juggalo who was in jail for filing a false police report because he reported that his wife was fucking the neighbor and they were planning to burn his house down. At one point in his story he went running out the door with a sword and at another point there were snakes everywhere. He insisted they were real, reasoning that there were so many because he was bleeding from the head and snakes are attracted to blood. Stick to dexedrine, kids. Honestly, though, he was a really good person. He made up with his wife on the phone. He loves her so much. It was touching. He also told me about juggalo culture, saying that underneath the lyrics about murder and psychosis, INSANE CLOWN POSSE is using their music to subliminally promote good morals. After talking to him, I'd got a new respect for juggalo culture. Seems to me like it's a lot of poor white kids from broken homes who society looks down on who have found family in each other. Why hate on that?

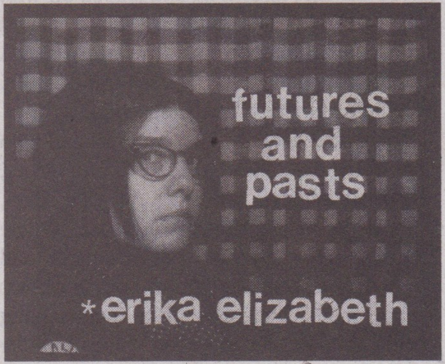
Anyway, after five days a van showed up and three days after that I was in Minnesota. When I finally got in front of a judge I got out without even having to pay bail. Folks in Minneapolis were really awesome. They housed me, lent me a skateboard, told me to help myself to whatever was in the fridge, etc. Now I'm back in Ottawa. Weirdly, I feel worse now than I did when I was inside. Jail definitely wasn't the adventure I was hoping to have, but it was an adventure. I actually had moments of real happiness in jail. Like I said, I'm a restless bastard and I usually feel like there's something I should be doing, that I don't deserve to be happy if I'm not doing my damnedest to undermine this horrible machine we're all a part of. In jail, there wasn't much I could do, so I felt relieved of that pressure. Plus, when I would talk to friends on the phone, everyone was so loving towards me and I felt so lucky to have the friends that I do. It helped put things in perspective for me. I've got a good life, and even tho I'm kind of an asshole people love me. It made me want to be less of an asshole.

Also, it was pretty mind-expanding to see how the American legal system works. I feel like my picture of reality and my understanding of oppression is more accurate now. It kind of sucks though, because the system really has the underclass by the balls. The Prison Industrial Complex is a finely-tuned machine of social control. They want to lock people up. It's not really even about punishment. It's about money and social control. It's an industry in which human beings are the commodity, and it's a massive counter-insurgency program. A lot of people were there for minor shit, like probation violations. There weren't that many scary, aggro dudes, and the few scary dudes weren't really trying to fuck with you. I'm sure some people do have nightmare experiences in the system, but I was in five different jails in four states, so I would think my experience must be somewhat reflective of the norm.

It was a lot of Born to Lose types. Most people never made money off their crimes. It was a lot of drug charges, DUI and driving suspended, and domestics. I liked more people than I disliked. My belief in the fundamental goodness of people is battered but intact. People are like dogs. If you abuse or neglect a dog when they're young, they're a lot likelier to hurt others. Same thing goes for humans. Whether you agree with me or not, if you're going to jail, my advice is don't judge others. Try to like people. It's a survival thing. People like people who like them, and you want people in jail to like you.

Jail sucks—it's supposed to suck—but it's not the end of the world. For millions and millions of people, it's just part of life. You can make the most of it. You've got all the time in the world to think about your life, to learn about the society that we live in, to learn to control your emotions, to become a more compassionate person by hearing the stories of people who have wound up under society's boot heel. Most of all, it's an opportunity to prove to yourself that you can overcome the challenge, because for sure, jail will challenge you. But if you have to get through it, you will, and if you can keep your mind positive, you might feel like the whole experience makes you stronger and wiser. One thing that kept things in perspective was knowing that most people were a lot worse off than I was in there. I feel a bit like a tourist writing this, because by jail standards a month is a really short period of time, but now I know what I can expect in jail. I'm definitely not going to become a law-abiding citizen, but I don't want to go back to jail, and there are risks that I would have taken before this happened that I won't take now. Someone said "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." You'll never know how much you can get away with until you know what you can't get away with.

—thecrowisamessenger@riseup.net



When I think about growing up in Houston in the late '90s and becoming increasingly engaged in DIY culture and underground music, one of the things that's most frustrating to me is how the involvement of women in Texan punk going back decades was never really made known to me. Discovering MYDOLLS in my early twenties (after I'd left Texas for New England, even) and realizing that there had been a female-dominated post-punk band from my hometown that I'd never known about was a revelation, and it was honestly one of the catalysts that pushed me into trying to uncover the secret histories of other punk and post-punk women whose work is at risk of being lost to time.

One of those bands is WHOOM-ELEMENTS, an all-female trio from Austin who regularly played local shows with many of the now-legends of the early '80s Texas scene (think BIG BOYS, DICKS, and the STAINS / MDC), and whose only proper recordings can be found on a two-song ESR Records single from 1982 that has been criminally overlooked in the frenzy for KBD gems from the Lone Star State. "Of Love" is a starkly minimalist and wiry pop song with biting feminist lyrics ("*you can't handle the responsibility / of love*") cloaked in deceptively delicate overlapping group harmonies, while "Men in the Politics" follows in the tradition of late '70s UK femme-punks like DELTA 5 and the AU PAIRS who set their critiques of traditional gender roles against sharp, needling, guitar lines and danceable bass-driven rhythms. There's some clear parallels to be drawn between WHOOM-ELEMENTS and some of the other women who banded together in generally male-dominated local scenes across America to make their own stripped-down sounds skirting the line between punk and post-punk at the beginning of the '80s, like CHALK CIRCLE in Washington, D.C., NEO BOYS in Portland, or MORBID OPERA in south Florida (to name just a few who have had their recordings reissued and newly appreciated over the last few years). It felt really fitting to finally track down a copy of this single while I was in San Francisco last month on my first real tour at age 32, doing something that never would have seemed possible to me as a teenage punk in Houston who had so few women performers to look up to in my own community.

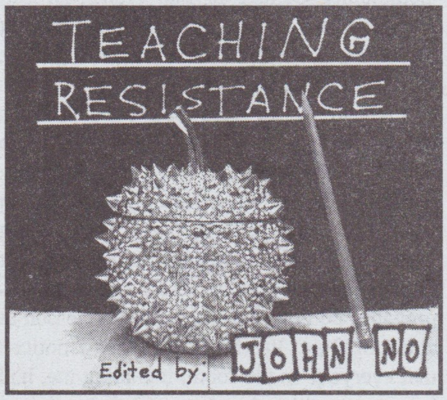
IXNA were a duo operating on the fringes of the Bay Area's experimental music scene in the early '80s, and their sole release, a two-song 1981 single on the Dumb Records label run by DIY glam weirdo extraordinaire NOVAK, takes the art-damaged synth-punk of their local peers (think the UNITS, LOS MICROWAVES, PINK SECTION, etc.) into an even more cut-up and flipped-out direction. "Mi Ne Parolas" has a certain level of notoriety as probably the only '80s post-punk jam with lyrics delivered entirely in Esperanto (everyone's favorite international auxiliary language), with Marina LaPalma's sing-song chanted vocals backed by some staccato guitar, throbbing bass, hallucinatory multi-tracked tape loops of a Chuck Berry guitar riff, and scissors that have taken the place of cymbals as a percussive instrument. IXNA turns to avant-electro darkwave in a TUXEDOMOON vein on the B-side "Ixna Portal Exo," which takes the constructed language concept even further as LaPalma recites her lines in a totally self-invented dialect over a sparse synthpulse and haunting tape manipulations. From a time and place that yielded no shortage of total oddball post-punk obscurities, this is one of the best.

I had completely missed the debut cassette from Parisian quintet EN ATTENDANT ANA when it first appeared last year, but luckily it found a well-deserved vinyl reissue as a 12" EP this spring thanks to Canada's Nominal Records. *Songs From the Cave*'s six songs all combine warm, droning, organ; propulsive rhythms; and sweetly spectral vocals that betray a strong influence from ELECTRELANE's synthesis of Krautrock and post-punk in the early-to-mid aughts, albeit with a looser, more shambolic, aesthetic pulled from the pop-leaning wing of late '70s / early '80s UK DIY that included bands like DOLLY MIXTURE, as well as the frenetic jangle of the subsequent C86 movement. It'd be really easy for that particular formula to result in something that's too twee by about half (I mean, one of the five members of the band just plays trumpet), but there's a certain downer streak lurking beneath EN ATTENDANT ANA's kaleidoscopic melodies that's descended more from NICO-era VELVET UNDERGROUND or LOOK BLUE GO PURPLE than Sarah Records, thankfully. (Nominal Records, enattendantana.bandcamp.com)

Describing something as "the FALL stumbling down a staircase backwards" is a really good way to get my attention, so props are due to Goner Records for bringing the new demo cassette from Memphis' HASH REDACTOR to my attention. It's four songs of trebly, blown-out, DIY racket of the highest order, with the sort of borderline unintelligible, caustically talk-shouted, vocals that completely nail Mark E. Smith's "too much speed chased with a couple of pints" paranoia. So yeah, they sound more than a little like the FALL, but HASH REDACTOR also take a few cues from the ramshackle lo-fi art-punk of SWELL MAPS ("Fish" could pass for a tape-decayed outtake from *A Trip to Marineville*) and, if anything, I'm reminded of the very underrated IN OUT from Boston, who have crafted their own brilliantly disjointed American hex inductions in various incarnations since the early '90s. When everyone kept enthusiastically recommending PROTOMARTYR to me over the last few years ("but seriously, they *really* sound like the FALL!") and it always failed to click, this is exactly what I was looking for but never managed to find. (hashredactor.bandcamp.com)

After a few self-released cassettes and a split tape earlier this year with HONEY RADAR, Philadelphia noise-poppers TELEPATHIC (featuring current and ex-members of the fairly like-minded BLOWDRYER and READING RAINBOW) just released their first LP, with 19 songs in just over 30 minutes like they're GUIDED BY VOICES circa 1994 or something. On *Self Checkout*, the trio references a whole spectrum of crucial DIY touchstones from the late '70s through the early '90s, hopscotching from nervously lean post-URINALS punk on "MTIC" and "Mental Masturbation," to freewheeling Flying Nun-style pop accented with warbly organ à la the CLEAN on "Pretend to Multiply," to a vintage Kill Rock Stars / K Records vibe with "Calculator." The intertwining harmonies from guitarist Rob Garcia and bassist Sarah Everton, in particular, pick up some of the threads left behind by ERIC'S TRIP or TIMES NEW VIKING, both of whom shared TELEPATHIC's knack for burying insistent pop hooks underneath a mess of distortion, fuzz, and primitive lo-fi punk clamor. (Third Uncle, store.thirduncle.com/album/self-checkout)

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds at futuresandpasts.org.



Adult Education and ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers in the U.S. have a unique privilege and responsibility in working with the students they teach. All of their students are people who have been marginalized under the American system in a wide variety of ways—in mid-sized to major cities almost all the students are people of color, many (a clear majority) are immigrants (including undocumented immigrants), economic disadvantage is the norm, and they are generally adults who have to juggle work, children, and other family responsibilities with school, which is often held at night. As such, their teachers have a unique opportunity to incorporate their students' perspectives into classroom teaching and practice, and often find (as I personally have as an adult school teacher) that the students have a keener understanding of how fucked the system is, and why, than the teacher and other school authorities ever could.

***Ruth Crossman**, who wrote this month's*

Teaching Resistance, teaches English as a Second Language in the community college system. A writer and activist who has always held that the pen is mightier than the sword, Ruth sees ESL instruction for immigrant communities as a path to empowerment. She works to create a supportive and student-fronted classroom environment where students can draw on material from their own lives in order to improve their English skills.

Problem Posing in the ESL Classroom

> *"No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption."*
>
> —Paolo Freire

I was with my night school class when we found out Trump had won. It was a noncredit ESL class on the Mission campus of the Community College of San Francisco. Our classroom windows faced out onto Bartlett Street, and over the course of the night we had heard the atmosphere at the nearby bars and restaurants go from loud and boisterous to deadly quiet. My students, all Latin American immigrants, had been dutifully working with me on a lesson about how to fill out job applications, but it was getting harder and harder to keep up a pretense that everything was normal. I realized there was probably no point in continuing the lesson at about 8:30 pm Pacific Time, when I noticed that everyone in the room, including me, had been surreptitiously checking their phones every five minutes to see which states had been called and which were still in play. I wasn't sure how to address it but I decided that it was important to be authentic. I needed to step out of teacher mode and talk to them as my heartbroken self and not as their grammar teacher. I told them that it looked like Clinton was going to lose, that I was sorry, and that I loved them and worried about them. I also said that I understood if they wanted to end class early that night. But the reaction of the class surprised me. Instead of looking shaken like me, my students looked grimly determined.

"Karena," a Venezuelan woman who always sat in the front row, shrugged her shoulders. "It's ok teacher," she said. "Tomorrow is a different day." Then someone else asked me a grammar question and we went back to the lesson. The tone was subdued and there were a lot of muttered side conversations going on in Spanish, but the class continued. Apparently, I was the one who needed comforting more than them.

Over the rest of that semester there were a lot of conversations in the teacher's room about how to address "what had just happened" with our students, but the sense I picked up during class was that it wasn't something they wanted to talk about at school. Sometimes a student would bring up "Mr. Trump," but whenever that happened I noticed there were other students who would look uncomfortable or shut down. I thought of myself as I had been in elementary school—a stoic, studious child growing up in a neighborhood that was ravaged by the crack epidemic—and remembered that the teachers I had always loved best were the ones who made the classroom into a literal sanctuary: a well ordered, highly structured place where I could forget about what waited for me at home and lose myself in books and math problems. I decided to take the same approach with my students now. We talked about how to give directions and how to describe work experience using past tense verbs. We talked about how to compare prices for vegetables and how to read medicine labels, but we didn't talk about politics.

Nevertheless, the experience I had on election night was nagging at me. I wanted to find a way to bring the issues of the outside world into my ESL class but I needed a way to do it without making my students feel uncomfortable, and without making the conversation about me. What right did I have to start talking about mass deportation in the presence of students who might themselves be undocumented? Was it worth it to devote an entire class period to talking about what to do when the cops pulled you over if many of my students seemed more interested in improving their spelling skills? As I turned these questions over in my mind, I returned to a text I had skimmed over in graduate school, but had pretty much ignored ever since: *A Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paolo Freire. A radical activist from Brazil, Freire had developed his own pedagogical theory while teaching literacy to peasants. The biggest prick to my conscience during this period was Freire's warning that education is never neutral and that students must be put at the center of their own learning process. The why of using Freirean pedagogy with my students seemed pretty self-explanatory, but I was less clear about the how. That was when I remembered one of his key techniques: use a picture to pose a problem. I found a book in the teacher's room called *Problem Posing in the ESL Classroom*. It looked like it hadn't been used since the 1970s, but it contained exactly what I wanted: a sequence of pictures portraying real life problems which would be familiar to my students, and a set of open-ended activities for each one to invite classroom discussion. I decided to try it out with my Saturday class, a lower-intermediate English course where most students were immigrants in their 20s and 30s.

The scenarios were pretty intense, including heavy social issues such as spousal abuse and drug dealing, and so I decided to deal with something relatively "safe": what to do about a friend who wants to drive home drunk. The picture shows one man looking concerned and uncomfortable while a man next to him tosses back a drink. He is holding his car keys in the other hand and a young woman is standing next to him. Underneath the picture is a short text explaining the situation: Mario is at a business event with his supervisor, Javier, and his coworker Patricia. He is concerned because Javier is very drunk but he is about to drive home. He is going to give their coworker Patricia a ride home too. Mario doesn't want them to drive, but Javier is an important man in his company and he doesn't want to upset him. My students were riveted. "He should call a taxi!" One student shouted. "No, it's too much money" Someone else shot back. "My brother in law drove drunk, and he had to pay a $4,000 ticket" someone else chimed in. I had planned on spending only an hour or so on the lesson, but it ended up spilling over into the next week.

By the time we wrapped up, students were researching drunk driving laws and penalties in different states, and writing and performing role play scenarios in which Mario confronted Javier about his behavior. I realized that what had felt uncomfortable for me to address as a lecturer began to feel more normal if I made myself a facilitator instead. By giving students what Freire referred to as a "generative picture," I gave them the freedom to project their own ideas and worries onto a fictional character, and provided them with control over how much they felt comfortable sharing about themselves. More importantly than that, I was calling on their own, often extensive, life experience as a resource for discussing the situation, stepping in to provide vocabulary and grammar direction when needed but otherwise giving them control over the conversation. In a political climate where many of them are reminded daily how little power they have and how little their voices are heard, Freirean problem-posing can become a source of empowerment within the classroom.

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), Community Colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, *and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com . There is also an archive for this column which can be found online at http://teachingresistancearchive.blogspot.com —John No, Teaching Resistance editor*

JOAN sez PEACE FUKER

As I re-read Grace Ambrose's last column as coordinator (in issue #415), I noticed a glaring absence. Her column is for the most part personal; it is a reflection of the good times that she had here, the connections that she made along the way, and her goals for the future. But what she doesn't mention is just how much work Grace has put into *Maximum Rocknroll* to make it more effective. Perhaps she didn't want to brag, or perhaps she didn't have the space to write any more than she did. Either way, I believe that it is important that the readers know just how much Grace busted her ass to make the magazine a better place.

One of the most dedicated and consistent shitworkers at the magazine told me as an aside that Grace Ambrose is the greatest coordinator for the magazine since Tim Yohannan himself, and despite never having met at least half of the previous coordinators, it is readily apparent why. Grace has an incredible knack for organization that only a Virgo could possibly have. The redesign of the magazine that happened recently? Grace's idea—and a good one at that. The sleeker, less damaged look of recent issues of *MRR* are a huge upgrade from the dated appearance of ones from the last 25 years—even the ones from two years ago look significantly older than they are. But the positive changes that she spearheaded were not entirely aesthetically oriented. Almost singlehandedly, she restructured the majority of the magazine to run in a much more decentralized fashion, creating new and important roles for shitworkers that allowed *MRR* to run more effectively as well as democratically. And she did so while also juggling her day job, her band, her record label, and her friendships with other people. When I moved here, I was immediately in awe of the way she so seamlessly handled all of them. And even now, I still don't know how she did it without drinking dozens of cups of coffee daily. Her tireless effort paid off—I wasn't here when Grace arrived, but it is safe to say that she left the magazine in better shape than it was in when she started. It is without a doubt that the impact of her ceaseless labor will remain with *MRR* in perpetuity.

Despite her importance in the magazine, this column is not about Grace Ambrose. We have spent the last three years learning all about her, both directly and indirectly, through the issues of *MRR* that she coordinated. Rather, this column is about *me*. As a perpetual oversharer, I have divulged some fairly personal information about myself while writing my old column, but I *need* to tell you *more*. You may know that I am coordinator, that I am from Florida, that I'm trans, that I love metal, hell, you may even know that I love hardcore. But do you *know* anything about me? Grab some popcorn, because I am willing to spill *all sorts* of personal information.

I grew up in Melbourne, Florida, where one can easily see the Space Shuttle launch from NASA's base in Cape Canaveral, Florida. According to family lore (an incredibly contradictory source of information, the accuracy of which I am not certain), my grandfather moved there with his wife and six children in the '50s to work as an engineer on NASA's Project Mercury. At some point (again, according to secondhand stories) he quit NASA to sell marijuana. Certain members of my family have told me that he was one of the main dealers for the entirety of Brevard County during that time. But during his years dealing he became despondent and unhappy with his life. He no longer wished to wallow in his sin, so he found the light and gave his life to Christ. His whole family immediately followed suit and, soon after, he turned their mobile home into a shelter for the homeless, somehow fitting one or two lost souls in with the other seven members of his family. With the support of a prominent Baptist church, this makeshift homeless shelter eventually evolved into the Christ Is The Answer Rescue Mission (or CITA for short), which is still open to this day and is the only homeless shelter in the Melbourne area.

The support of the church was vital for its survival, and it also informed the structure of the shelter. Both the church and my family believed that sin was the root cause of homelessness; their solution was to shepherd the homeless back to God. Accordingly, a harsh puritanical moral order was imposed on the men staying at CITA (no women were permitted to stay; they could only visit the men during approved visiting hours in public spaces). The boarders at CITA would be kicked out if they failed to attend at least three sermons per week. Absolutely no drug use of any sort was permitted of those seeking shelter at CITA; persons caught using illegal drugs or drinking were expelled from the campus immediately. The men were also expected to find gainful employment while staying there; if someone could not find a job, he could work at one of the two thrift stores owned by the homeless shelter. Ideally, the adherence to the Mission's strict rules would correct the deviancy inflicted by the devil and allow the men to fully integrate into society.

Much of the ethos behind CITA was derived from my family's own ideas of what it means to be a successful member of society. My father was a deacon at an Independent Baptist church, a denomination largely defined by its distrust of the "liberalism" and "modernism" of other organized Baptist groups, including the largest one, the rather conservative Southern Baptist Convention (as an aside: Independent Baptist churches also view most translations of the Bible besides the King James Version as corrupted by modernity and sin—this is proof of how radical they are, as most churches have abandoned this translation of the Bible). He, along with the rest of my family, hoped that my sister and I would follow the family ways; to ensure that I would grow up to live a life for Christ, we were essentially quarantined in a web of Christianity. My parents at a very young age consecrated the lives of my sister and me for Christ, and we were expected to always be Godly people. Our training was rigorous, but there was a particular pressure on me that my sister didn't experience (she had her own awful experiences that were in some ways worse but that I cannot expound upon here). As the AMAB child, there was a particular pressure on me to follow in my father and grandfather's footsteps and run the homeless shelter at some point. Beyond visiting church at least three times each week, my parents insisted that we attend the elementary school operated by our church. This was so important to my family that, in order to receive a tuition break, my mother worked part time serving lunch to the children at our school. Our school did not entirely focus on reading, writing, and 'rithmetic; sermons were also a part of the daily curriculum. Outside of school and church, my sister and I remained seemingly by design almost entirely isolated from the secular world. The glimpses we had of the realities of other people were almost exclusively in shared public spaces, such as the beach or parks. Socializing with the damned public was encouraged to a small extent, but usually we were encouraged to invite the unsaved to church for conversion. During our pre-pubescent years there were instances where our parents scolded us for not evangelizing enough in public.

If the people my sister and I talked to were convinced to join church or became saved (spoiler alert: they never were convinced; they never became saved), they would not have found much to enjoy at our family's church. The pastor and the rest of the staff at our church extended its distrust of the corruption of liberalism and modernism beyond not just the Baptist denomination but also to the rest of society. Our pastor almost always noted that Jesus spoke more frequently about the terrifying nature of Hell than he did about Heaven, and like a true Christian he followed suit by frequently describing the sinful nature of secular society. He almost always note that the devil himself was responsible for the creation of things of "this world" such as *the Simpsons* or violent video games. Accordingly consumption of worldly things must be avoided (although interestingly this somehow did not prevent my family from accepting invitations to watch football games at the pastor's house). He thoroughly described every little detail about hell in almost every single sermon—it was completely dark, utterly painful, full of "the gnashing of teeth." While a non-Christian may groan or laugh at the possibility of cultural landmarks such as *Ren & Stimpy* or *Harry Potter* being the handiwork of Satan, to those attending our church it was both frighteningly real and painfully obvious. We also learned that Satan was responsible for all sorts of "corruption" in society. AIDS? Satan. The Gays? Satan. Addiction? Well...you get the picture. The general gist is that anybody that did not fit a very defined range of "successful" society members were being corrupted by sin. I never wanted to have that happen to me If you told me as a child that I would lose my faith in God *and* that I am trans, I would have immediately been overwhelmed with terror and would have done everything in my power to prevent either of those things.

And yet, by the time I first went to public school in 6th grade, I found myself slowly slipping away from my family's, and by extension God's, plan for me. My first encounter with non-Christians utterly startled me to the core. These people in my school... they were crass, and they were sinners...but they weren't awful! I didn't feel compelled to preach to them—I wanted to be like them! I quickly started to learn their ways, although elements of their sinful nature brought on a great amount of anxiety. I still remember the first time I used God or Jesus as anything but a reference to our Lord and Savior. This is so grave of a sin that it is specifically mentioned in the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7; King James Version). I remember asking myself what would happen if I were to *actually* use Jesus Christ or God to complain—would I be branded like Cain? Would I be killed? These doubts, while extremely laughable in retrospect, kept me awake at night for at least a week. My first time lightly saying "Jesus Christ" was extremely anti-climatic. I got hit in the stomach by a dodgeball, and just as the air left my chest I could hear myself wheeze out "goddamnit." A double whammy! It was also my first time uttering a *secular* curse word as well! While I was in pain, I quickly realized that absolutely no aspect of that agony could even remotely be described as punishment from God. I made the next logical leap—if I could break this commandment, maybe I could embrace other worldly things without suffering any consequences. I began to learn and copy from my peers; I wanted to be like them. In hindsight, this is how I began to untangle my own identity from that of Christianity and my family.

However, this newfound willingness to explore the ways of the world was hidden from my church and family. As my interest in Christianity waned, my fear of my mother and father dramatically increased. As a child, the punishments for wrongdoing were occasionally severe, but never worse than spanking with a belt or a paddle. But my crimes as a child were not as awful as sacrilege—I feared what would happen to me if my family discovered my sinful ways. Would it be worse than a spanking? Out of cowardice I kept my mouth shut. I'm thankful I did too. My family shunned my older gay cousin (I barely remembered his existence until he introduced himself to me in my senior year of school!) until he became closeted again and rededicated it life to God. Who knows what they would have said or done if I had expressed the growing feelings of dysphoria that I experienced at the time? I simply switched myself off when I was in the same room as my family; I stayed silent, and spoke almost nothing unless it were absolutely necessary. It was a self-imposed hell, one with long lasting consequences that have taken years to correct, but one that I felt was absolutely necessary.

My only solace during my pre-teen and teen years was music. I was given an alarm clock when I was about ten, and through the clock's radio I discovered music that I never knew existed. Melbourne didn't have college radio stations, so I wound up falling in love with Motown, classic rock, and grunge. Thanks to my father's thrift shop, my family had access to computers and the internet at a young age, and through websites like Allmusic I was able to explore a world of sound that was fascinating. I quickly moved from the grunge bands to significantly hipper fare. I fell in love with SONIC YOUTH and through scavenging their old message board I discovered many artists that I still love, such as FLIPPER, TEENAGE JESUS & THE JERKS, and a band that to this day remains one of my favorite bands I've ever heard—VOID. The chaos and noisiness of their music, the despair in the vocalists' yowls, and the anarchic nihilism of their lyrics acted as a salve. To misquote SWIRLIES, in disharmony, new found freedom. Through the music I found the equivalent of the discomfort, confusion, and pain I felt as the testosterone in my body kicked into full gear and my body transformed into a monstrous, hairy form. Listening to noisy music at home was therapy for me. I swiftly sought out local shows, hoping to see some music that was as wild and dissonant as my new favorite bands. I didn't even have to sneak out to see these shows—I told my parents that they were happening at a church or that Christians were organizing them. While few bands that I saw fully grabbed my interest (the only one that I will still listen to occasionally is CAPSULE), I was hooked, and have been semi-steadily obsessed with almost every aspect of music since then.

The next logical step after shutting myself down around my folks was to move away from them. I did exceptionally well in school, and with my state-issued scholarship, I had the opportunity to attend whichever state college I wanted. So I moved to Tallahassee, Florida to attend Florida State University, which was a five hour drive away (practically ensuring that my family would rarely visit). I won't talk very much about my time there, as honestly it's not as unique—I spent years trying to figure myself out, I started drinking heavily, and I flunked out of college as a result. I look back in embarrassment at much of my time there, but I do not regret everything I did in Tallahassee. Beyond the great friends that I made, I achieved several different things: I was music director at the local college radio station for a bit (where I also was a DJ for nine years); I started and co-owned a record store; and I had a really fun time playing in several bands. But one of the largest, and most important things that I achieved there was coming out as a trans woman to myself and others, including my mother. My family handled it as well as you would imagine—most of them have shunned me (except my mom—hi mom!). Fortunately, I have the friends and family I have made through music to be there for me.

Oh, and here's the really important info about me: I'm twenty-nine years old and with my sun in Aries, moon in Cancer, and an Aries ascendant. Do with that what you will. And I *promise* that I won't always ramble about myself in these columns. Hell, maybe you'll even hear about music!

RIP FRED COLE

Photo: Eric Geevers

"I'm so sorry to have to let you know that Fred lost his battle with cancer and passed away peacefully in his sleep last night, Nov 9, 2017. Thanks you one and all for all the years & memories we all shared together, for being friends first & business partners second, so proud to be a part of your lives.

Fred had that quality of being "immortal" and I believe his songs and recordings will make it so. We can always hear his voice and his passion there and remember it like it was only yesterday & will go on forever. I love you all."

—Toody Cole

*****

"The last train is leaving
Can't you read the signals in my eyes
And I'm standing on the platform
Waiting for the ones I've left behind"

—Fred Cole, *Last Train*

*****

Fred Cole is dead. He was 69. The musical genius rock'n'roller who was fiercely independent as an individual and artist, is being mourned and missed by the thousands of people that he affected—including us here at *Maximum Rocknroll*.

Fred was born on August 28, 1948, and was in garage bands as a teenager in Las Vegas. Fred and his band the Weeds ended up in Portland after driving to San Francisco for a gig, only to be laughed at and dismissed. They then decided to drive to Canada to avoid the draft. They ran out of gas in Portland, where they found the Folk Singer coffee shop and a thriving scene, and Fred found Toody. They were married in 1967.

Fred's early bands include the Lords, the Weeds / the Lollipop Shoppe, Zipper, King Bee, and many many many more.

After King Bee opened for the Ramones, Fred decided to start a punk band. Toody learned to play bass, Rod Rat learned to play drums. They put out an eponymous record. Then Rod quit. They got Sam Henry, put out the album *Intermittent Signals,* Sam quit. Then Louie plays drums on *In A Desperate Red* and quits. Fred railed against the disloyalty, and started The Range Rats, a country band, with Toody and a drum machine. Lucky for us, he got bored, and in 1987, when Fred was 40, he and Toody started Dead Moon with Andrew Loomis.

Dead Moon was the best band ever. In 2006, after 19 years, tons of records, tours, and unforgettable nights as performers, or the soundtrack, Dead Moon broke up. We mourned. Pierced Arrows started in 2007. We celebrated. They recorded and toured, made memories, and ended in 2016. Fred and Toody started played unplugged sets in 2013. Those shows were intimate and fervent, so special and so sweet. They played as a duo through early 2017.

Fred Cole is dead. He wrote his autobiography in the songs, then revisited and revised the autobiography on later records. His basic message to us is that living life on your own terms is a hard path to take, but there is nothing better. *Nothing*.

Fred was always supportive to musicians on the fringes. He would offer ridiculous credit terms to people buying instruments at Capt Whizeagles and Tombstone Music. He would take every opportunity to be encouraging. His advice, when you asked, was always to promote action. If things didn't work out, well, fuck it. Life is hard. Fred didn't try to hide the difficulties and pain of life in a cold world, but lived the best he could. He'd then turn the experiences into brutal heartbreaking ballads that were desolate and ached, or defiant full on hardwired rockers that reeked of gleeful "fuck you" triumph. Life hardships played at full volume with an open heart turn pain into cathartic and unforgettable times for people across the world. Fred'ws passion inspired passion in others, his "fuck it" inspired bravery, and his stubbornness inspired sticking to our guns. He chose music, friends, family, community, independence, creativity and "why not'? Sometimes it lead him to true love, total soul expression, and great artistic heights, sometimes to broken down burned out and fucked up. That path never led to to giving up or giving in.

"I had a great life" Fred told us from his deathbed, "no regrets". He talked about being excited for what's next, that all kinds of possibilities were open to him. If there is an afterlife, he said, he'll be good "as long as it's not full of christians". He told us of a few plans: he'll find Andrew, if Andrew doesn't find him first, and start a band with Lemmy while they're waiting for Toody. He'll be a guardian angel. He will see what's up with old friends, and will meet new ones. It was like he was planning on going on tour—packing up, leaving instructions, and saying heartfelt goodbyes full of love and admiration for friends and family and life.

Fred Cole is dead. It's so important to remember that death is part of the deal with being alive. Death inspires me to live well, and live true. To follow my rules and break theirs. To get my shit together. To burn bridges. To love fully and with loyalty. To appreciate what comes my way. To live like Fred Cole.

I kissed Fred goodbye, and said "Thank You". We hugged Toody, and drove away. Fred Cole died 4 days later.

—Erin Yanke

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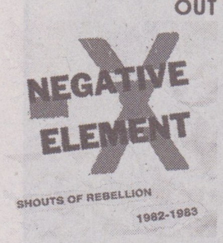
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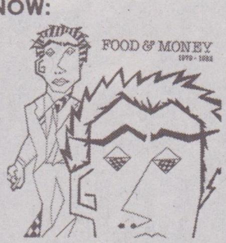
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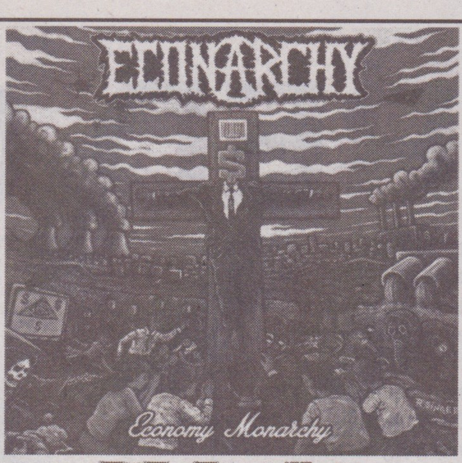
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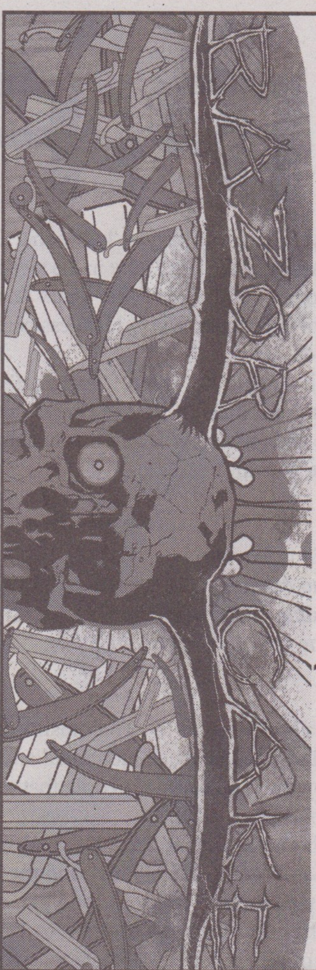

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LIZ PRINCE

Liz Prince makes some of my favorite comics. Sometimes they bust your guts with laughter, other times they rip your heart out and leave you staring at the bloody remains. She has a neww collection of her music-centric comics called Be Your Own Backing Band *out from Silver Sprocket Bicycle Club, and an all ages punk rock supernatural adventure comic called* Coady & The Creepies *from Boom Studios. We gabbed on the phone for a couple of hours about punk in comics, her creative process, and being a new reader's gateway into underground DIY culture. Interview by Jim Kettner. Illustrations by Liz Prince.*

MRR: So, Liz, you had a great title for this interview before tape was rolling, wanna say that again?
Liz Prince: It's called "Liz Prince doesn't really know what what she's doing but it's fine." An interview with Jim Kettner. *Maximum Rocknroll*. July 6, 2017, 2:02 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

MRR: That's some straight-up stardate type shit.
We need to know when and where we are.

MRR: Let's just start with the introductions. Comic fans might be familiar with your work, but maybe your average punk rocker is not. Tell us a little bit about yourself and your work.
My name is Liz Prince. I'm an autobiographical cartoonist who has been writing and drawing comics and self-publishing zines for the better part of twenty years now, and a lot of my work has focused on punk and what that means to me personally. I've done some album covers and designs and designs for bands like Masked Intruder and Worriers. And yeah, I don't know, if you haven't heard of me that's great. Good for you. You're probably a lot less annoyed than everyone else.

MRR: Since we are doing this interview for *Maximum Rocknroll*, let's let's talk a little bit about punk rock before we get into some of the comics stuff. How did you first get into punk? What was your gateway?
Green Day was definitely my gateway. I was 12 years old in 1994, "the year punk broke."

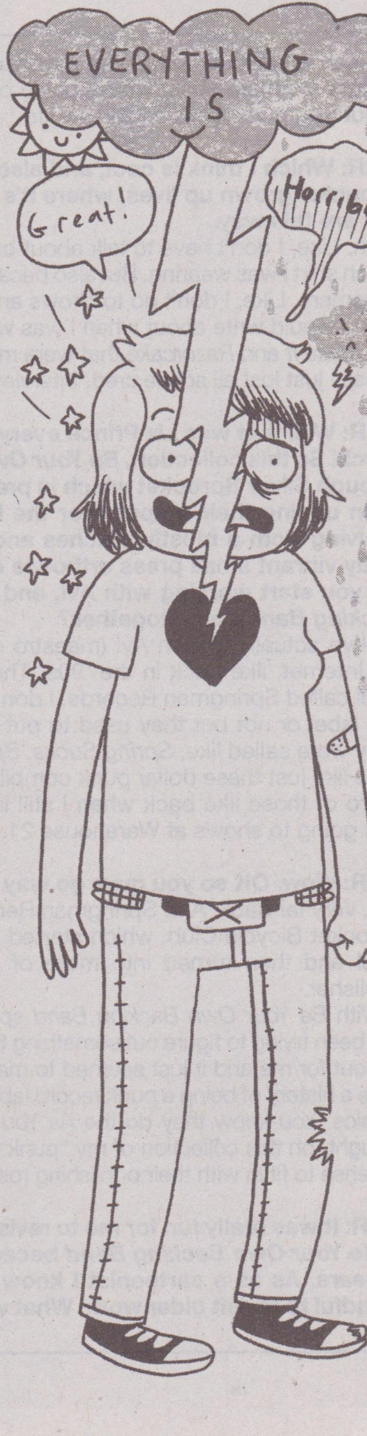
MRR: I always thought that was '91?
Well you're a bit older that me so...I had a cover of like...it might have been *Rolling Stone* or it might have been *Spin* taped to my wall. It had Green Day on the cover and it said, "the year punk broke." That was when *Dookie* came out. That was what did it for me.

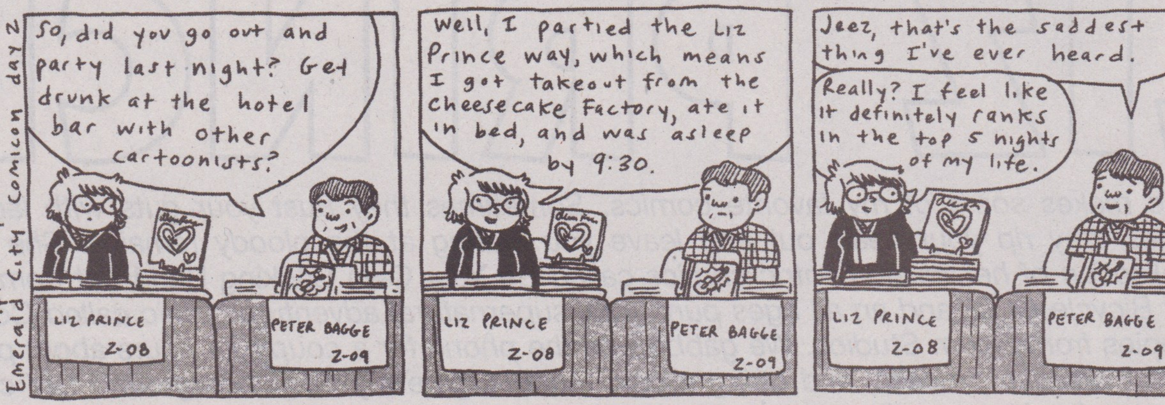
It was cool because, I mean a lot of people who were older than me consider them to be sellouts by that point, but through that was how I discovered Lookout Records, and they got me into more DIY punk bands. And I've remained a total pop punk nerd ever since. I have like, the absolute worst taste in music.

MRR: When we get to talking about *Be Your Own Backing Band*, there's this one great comic in there called "I Don't Want To Grow Up" that has a great arc of the punk rocker accepting what you're into, that's pretty awesome.

So you mentioned how your comics are informed by punk rock, but when I think back to some of your earlier stuff...it wasn't always *about* punk, but it always had the sensibilities of a punk rocker. I could always tell that there was a punk behind the pen. But increasingly it seems like punk has factored more and more into your stories. Can you tell us a little bit about how that happened?
Well I think that it's kind of interesting cause of reading like straight through *Be Your Own Backing Band*, it's a collection of comics that were on the website *If You Make It*, and my one page comic that I've been running in *Razorcake* for six years now.

MRR: Wow. it's been a while.
And since *If You Make It* and *Razorcake* are like specifically punk or music related outlets, I really wanted to have my comics be on theme. But when you read the book

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So, did you go out and party last night? Get drunk at the hotel bar with other cartoonists?
LIZ PRINCE 2-08
PETER BAGGE 2-09
Well, I partied the Liz Prince way, which means I got takeout from the Cheesecake Factory, ate it in bed, and was asleep by 9:30.
LIZ PRINCE 2-08
PETER BAGGE 2-09
Jeez, that's the saddest thing I've ever heard.
Really? I feel like it definitely ranks in the top 5 nights of my life.
LIZ PRINCE 2-08
PETER BAGGE 2-09

you can tell that I dropped that pretense and the later *Razorcake* comics are more about what's going on in my life and less talk about how punk is influencing my life.

MRR: Which I think is cool, and also part of the arc of a lot of punks' grown up lives, where it's eventually it's like...we just *are* this way.
Yeah. Like, I don't have to talk about bands I saw, or you know, which shirt I was wearing. But also because I went into punk rock retirement. Like, I don't go to shows anymore and that's usually what I would write about when I was writing these comics for *If You Make it* and *Razorcake* that were more "punk" focused. So I guess I just lost all scene cred. Interview over!

MRR: Well that was Liz Prince everyone! *[laughter]* No, no, psych! So this collection, *Be Your Own Backing Band* is out through Silver Sprocket which is pretty rad. They've totally been upping their output over the last few years and are evolving from a mostly patches and stickers distro into a really vibrant small press arthouse comics publisher. How did you start working with Avi, and how did *Be Your Own Backing Band* come together?
So I've actually known Avi (maestro of Silver Sprocket) from the internet, like back in the '90s. They used to run a record label called Springman Records. I don't know if you remember this label or not but they used to put out these compilations. They were called like, *Spring Sucks*, *Spring Really Sucks*. They were like just these dollar punk compilations. And I used to do distro of those like back when I still lived in Santa Fe when I was going to shows at Warehouse 21.

MRR: Wow. OK so you guys go way back on the Internet.
Yes. very far back. And Springman Records evolved into Silver Sprocket Bicycle Club, which started out as more of a record label and then turned into more of a punk merch / comic publisher.

With *Be Your Own Backing Band* specifically, Avi and I have just been trying to figure out something that Silver Sprocket could put out for me and it just seemed to make sense that since they have a history of being a punk record label, and now publish punk comics. You know they do the *As You Were* anthologies. I just thought, oh this collection of my "punk comics" just makes a lot of sense to fit in with their publishing roster.

MRR: It was really fun for me to revisit some of these strips in *Be Your Own Backing Band* because I hadn't read them in years. As as a cartoonist I know that it can be kind of dreadful to revisit older work. What was it like to pick these strips out? What was the selection process?
You know what's funny is that I actually tend to like my older work better than my newer work.

MRR: You're so lucky.
There's a lot of of stuff that I had written about or said or done that I probably would not do now. But I think that there's also just this is like, way less...I think by my older comics were just a lot more free-flowing in this way that I can't quite define. But I think I've lost that a little bit.

Also there's a note section in the book that was really fun to write just because I got to go back and amend certain aspects of certain comics. So I actually enjoyed the process and it's nice to have them all together just in one place now.

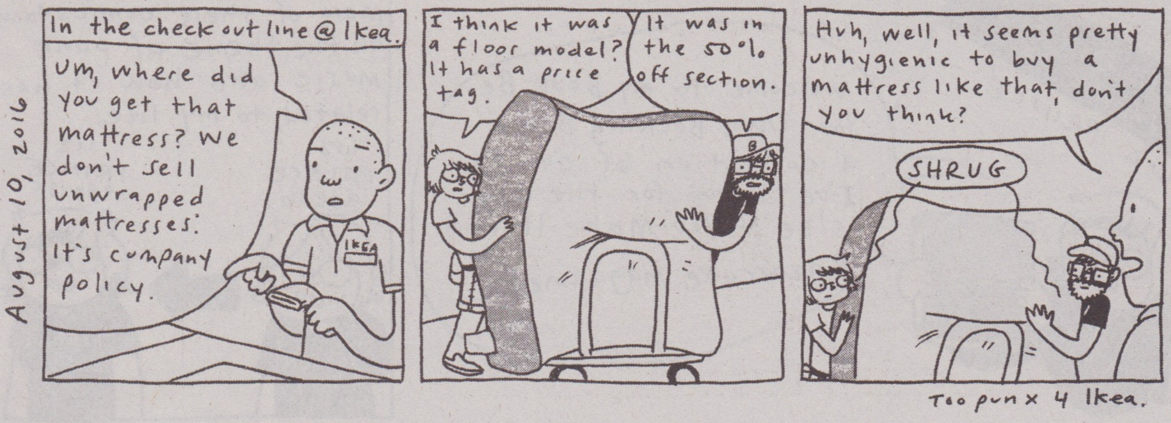
MRR: This collection is pretty amazing looking. And I'm very jealous of your ability to appreciate your older stuff... but you should. These are great comics.
I was just way more funny back then. I think my work has really taken on this kind of serious air. I just started doing my daily comics on Patreon again and I have not written a funny one... in the whole month that I've been doing them. And I was sitting down and I was like, "I want to write something funny," and it's like, fucking *nothing funny* has happened in my life in like so long.

MRR: Well I was going to ask you a little bit about that about how you choose what to write about. Do you have those times, maybe back when you were going to shows more, were you were like "oh I *have* to write about this show," or do you have to dig a little bit to find the material?
Luckily for most of those comics I was still in the habit of just... when something that I thought was funny or poignant happened I automatically was like, "oh I can see how this would be a comic." And so it was pretty immediate and it wasn't hard for me to go back and figure out what I wanted to write about, and it wasn't hard for me to find the humor in it. I don't know why I lost that a little bit...that...that *power*? Let's say? But, yeah, maybe I just enjoy life like less. *[laughter]*

MRR: Oh no! Wow, this is getting way dark! I love it!
I know, right?

MRR: Well you do have that one comic where you're drawing yourself as a goth. So maybe that's your calling now?
I *am* pretty goth now...

MRR: Do you have any comics in *Be Your Own Backing*


August 10, 2016
In the check out line @ Ikea.
Um, where did you get that mattress? We don't sell unwrapped mattresses. It's company policy.
IKEA
I think it was a floor model? It has a price tag.
It was in the 50% off section.
Huh, well, it seems pretty unhygienic to buy a mattress like that, don't you think?
SHRUG
Too punx 4 Ikea.

***Band* that are particular favorites?**
I mean the first comic in there...is it the "Punk Rock Is Ruining My Teeth" comic?

MRR: Yeah, this was your first one on *If You Make It* too?
Yeah. I just really like that comic. It still is something that I just do, and I can't stop doing it, grinding my teeth like this. And I mean, I love our Ergs comic that we drew together...

MRR: Oh no I was I was avoiding talking about that one...
Sorry, but then you shouldn't have asked me a question, where that was *obviously* going to be the answer. But that was great. I mean first off, that was such a great show to get to see the Ergs, after I had never seen them. And then, I mean that started us hanging out again. We hadn't really seen each other in like, a pretty long time.

MRR: It was a couple of years. There were a couple of years where we hadn't hung out, which made that was a really awesome trip.

But since you did bring it up...It was really fun, and I am really honored that you included this comic in this collection. I am a bit shy about my old work. Like, I cringe at my half of the comic. But what I really love is just remembering the show and remembering us sitting at Grindcore House drawing this shit, because that was really fun. Just passing the the pages around and doodling together...it was great.

The other awesome collaboration strip that you have in here is with Mitch Clem and Nation Of Amanda. When it came to that story I was like, oh my gosh, this just looks so like beautiful and right together.
That's because they actually penciled themselves into it and then I inked the whole thing.

MRR: Clever.
And so that's why it looks like shitty versions of their drawings... because I inked it.

MRR: There's that cartoonist low self-esteem I was looking for. There we go! *[laughter]*
Oh, that's *all over* the place. That book is just dripping it!

MRR: Well speaking of collaborations, do you want to talk a little bit about *Coady And The Creepies*? Because this [strip in *Be Your Own Backing Band*] was just the beginning of your your work with Nation Of Amanda.
Yeah I mean *Coady And The Creepies* is a four issue miniseries that I wrote, and Amanda Kirk, AKA Nation of Amanda drew. It's about a teenage touring punk band that's made up of triplet sisters, and there's a supernatural element to it. Coady, the drummer, is actually a ghost, but her sisters don't know that she's dead. So the series kind of revolves around Coady trying to hide that, while they're completing this "Pin-mageddon" tour, a tour of all the best DIY venues in the country, and collecting enamel pins from each of them.

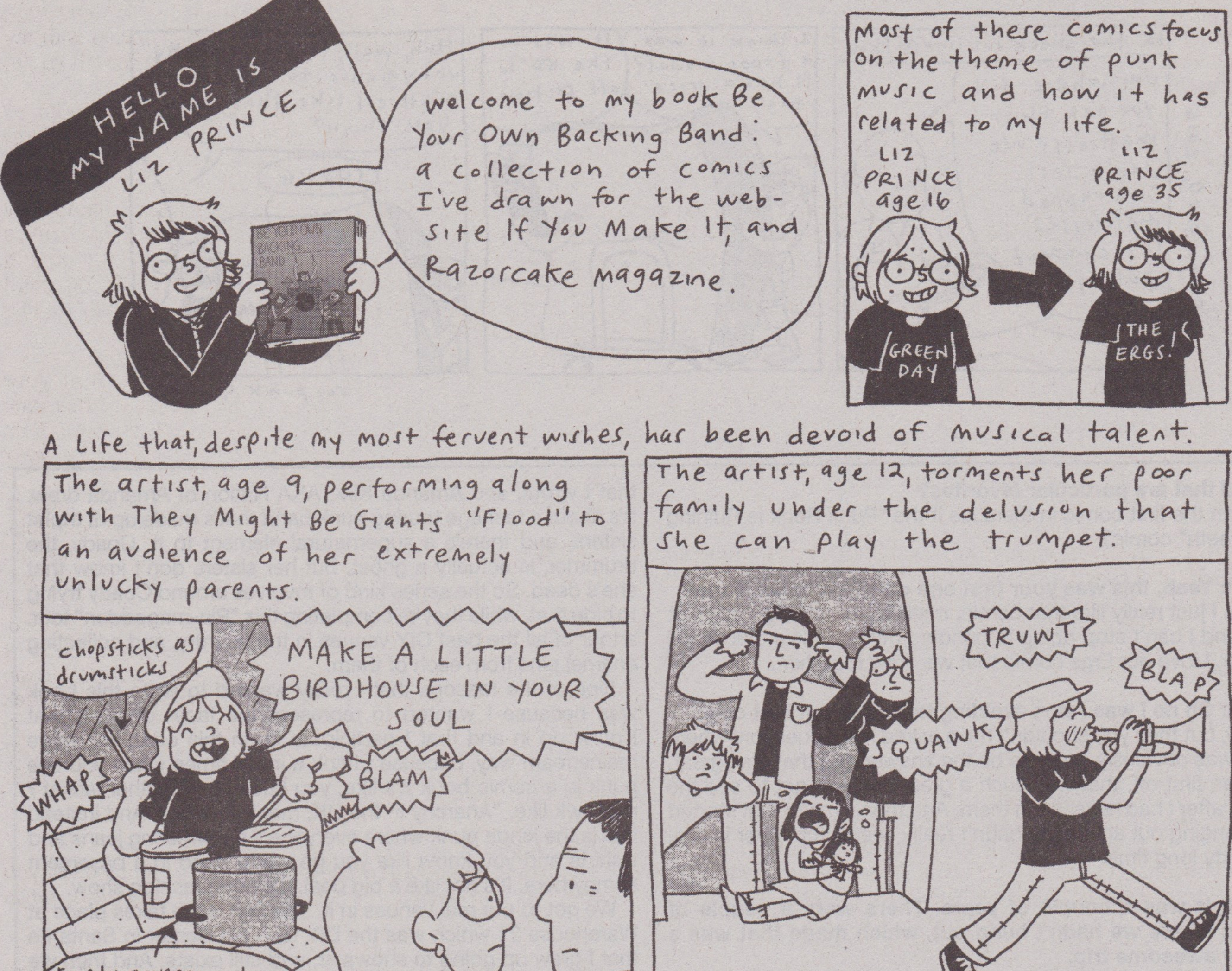
One of the reasons that I really wanted to write this book was because I wanted to represent the facet of punk that I grew up in and that I participate in, in this cartoony, more mainstream way, because I think a lot of times when you see punk in a comic book it's like, you know, that leather jacket / mohawk like, "Anarchy in the UK, man! *Auuugh*!" And instead this is the kinda punk where everyone's just wearing jeans and t-shirts and you know like you go see a band in a basement somewhere. It's not like a big deal. It's not a fashion show.

We got to put real venues in it. The first issue takes place at Warehouse 21 which was the DIY teen Art Center in Santa Fe that I grew up going to shows at, and still exists. And then we actually used real venues when we designed all the other Pin-mageddon pins that had been collected. And I've been getting a lot of really fun responses from readers being like, "oh my God, like, that's where I go to shows!" It's just been really fun.

MRR: Have you noticed any difference in terms of fandom? Like, are you are you living that dream of being some other 12-year-old's gateway into punk rock?
Yeah, *Coady and the Creepies* has been really cool. I've gotten a lot of emails from parents who are already fans of my work who have been sharing *Coady* with their kids, and their kids have been really responding to it. One of my friends, his 13-year-old daughter said she wants to write *Coady* fan-fiction now, and I'm hoping that he will share that with me when it's done.

Part of the reason that we wanted to highlight real DIY all-ages venues is that, if some 12-year-old kid is reading *Coady* and is like, "Whoa, I want to go to a show," then maybe they'll see Coady go to a show and be like, "Oh this place in St. Louis was listed. I live in St. Louis! Maybe I can go to a show there!" Like, I'm hoping that there can be this actual connection between the world of comic and actual, real punk.

MRR: How was it relinquishing control of actually drawing the comic to Amanda.
Oh it has been so great because I know the limitations of my own artwork. I know what I can and cannot portray, or what I just wouldn't want to. And so it's allowed me to put in way more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BE YOUR OWN BACKING BAND
welcome to my book Be Your Own Backing Band: a collection of comics I've drawn for the web-site If You Make It, and Razorcake magazine.
Most of these comics focus on the theme of punk music and how it has related to my life.
LIZ PRINCE age 16
GREEN DAY
LIZ PRINCE age 35
THE ERGS!
A life that, despite my most fervent wishes, has been devoid of musical talent.
The artist, age 9, performing along with They Might Be Giants "Flood" to an audience of her extremely unlucky parents.
chopsticks as drumsticks
MAKE A LITTLE BIRDHOUSE IN YOUR SOUL
WHAP
BLAM
Empty government peanut butter buckets and a pot
The artist, age 12, torments her poor family under the delusion that she can play the trumpet.
TRUWT
BLAP
SQUAWK
The artist, age 14, gives up trying to learn guitar because her father is an impatient teacher.*
Dammit Liz, I said hold your hand like this on the frets.
Like this?
The artist, age 17, is told it would really be better for everyone involved if she stopped singing-along to the stereo.
♫ A NEAR MISS OR A CLOSE CALL, I KEEP A ROOM AT THE HOSPITAL ♫
PS
NTUCKY
*and I was a petulant student

crowd scenes, because I don't have to draw that. *[laughter]* Like, sorry Amanda...but you have to draw a bunch of crowd scenes at a show, or you know, a catacomb filled with skulls...enjoy!

MRR: I wish we could all have an Amanda.
Yeah, I know. We all need an Amanda. But yeah it's really freeing in that, I can just let go of what my own artistic limitations are as well as what I just wouldn't want to draw, and just pass that on to someone else. Whenever I see the comics I've written be drawn by other people, like with the *Clarence* comic, with the *Steven Universe* story I did, and with *Cody And The Creepies*, it's always so surprising because it is very different from how I would have composed the panel, but it usually ends up working way better than what I would have drawn. It's been a cool experience.

MRR: You brought up a couple of the other licensed properties that you've written for...
That's right, I'm a professional at being interviewed [*laughter*], so I'm just gonna self-promote all these other things that I've done, and just name drop the fuck out of them.

MRR: That's 100 percent cool, cuz I know that there's punk rockers out there who read *MRR* who will probably also love your Lemongrab story, or like, *Garfield*.
It's great. I get to pepper these licensed comics with my punk sensibilities, like the *Adventure Time* story, "Fruit Salad Days", where Lemongrab is the lead singer of a punk band called Unacceptable, and there's some funny little punk jokes that I doubt a lot of kids who read that comic understood, but it was fun for me to put them in there.

Actually this one super fan, she'd never read my work before that *Adventure Time* story, and it actually turned her punk. She went through, and found every reference, like figured out what it was, and started listening to those bands, which is cool because it's totally how I was. I was reading Evan Dorkin comics, like *Hectic Planet* where everyone has different punk shirts or ska shirts, and I'd be like, "Oh cool, this comic guy who I like...he likes good music. I want to listen to that." Or you know, arguably good…

MRR: Yeah listen, the whole pretense of this interview is actually to get you *on the record* about what third wave ska bands you are deep into...
Give me Reel Big Fish or give me death! Mighty Mighty Bosstones all the way!

Evan Dorkin drew the Bill and Ted comic and they're wearing like, All t-shirts. So, it's just like continuing that tradition.

MRR: Yeah, like little punk Easter eggs converting the youth of today...
Pun *intended*...

MRR: Of course it was. Well if we're going to plug some of your other stuff, can you tell us a little bit about the Patreon comics? What does your cartoonist practice look like?
My Patreon campaign is a monthly subscription service where you can sign up to read these daily short three panel comic strips that I've been drawing, either digitally online, or you can get a print comic sent to you at the end of each month.

And I've always wanted to do a subscription service. I think that part of DIY punk and growing up in the '90s was the idea of like, ordering tapes in the mail, ordering zines in the mail. Or even just sending letters and mixtapes and CDs and shit to people, was a big part of what I grew up doing. Patreon was just the platform that could keep track of people's addresses and who had paid which month. It just seemed like the right time to take that plunge.

I tried to alter what I was writing about earlier this year. I tried to write this longer form story about my relationship with my dad, and it just didn't work as like a, "oh, every month you're going to make an issue of this and send to people."

It was a heavy book to write. But also a book that involves so many other people in my family, and personal things that have to do with them and not just me, that I really wanted them to be able to weigh in on the story before I published it and sent it out.

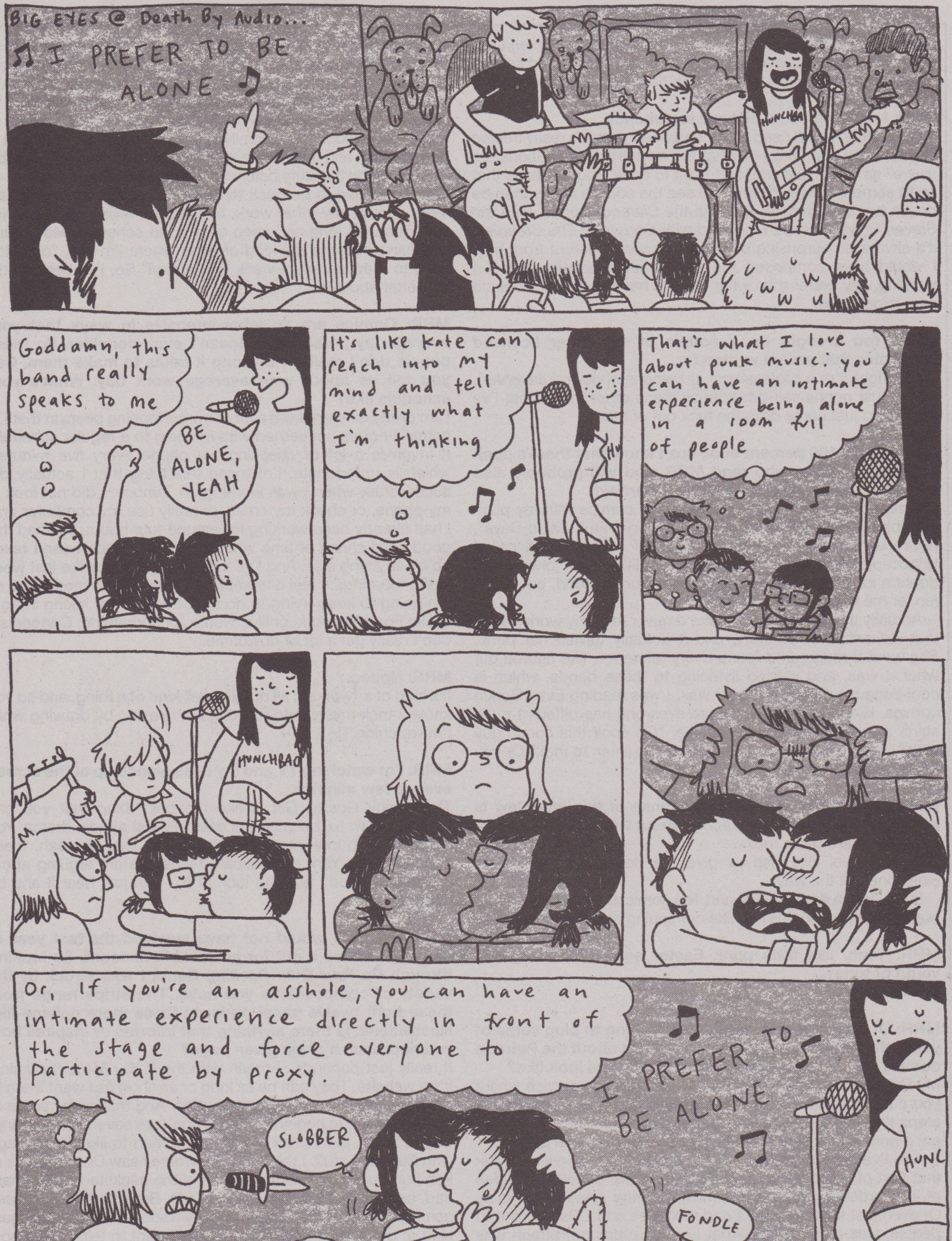
So I decided to go back to my daily comics, and it actually really informs my other work, to just be drawing these comics every day. As long as I keep on a good schedule with it, and it doesn't become the kind of thing where I'm like, "oh shit, I have to draw an entire week like, today!" So, I've been a little bit better about it.

MRR: Comics are so labor-intensive in ways that your average lay person just doesn't even consider. So many people don't realize how long it takes to make them. Can you tell us about your average work day. What's your schedule like?
I am pretty different from a lot of my cartooning peers in that I'm actually not as concerned with keeping to a regular schedule. It involves a lot of checking my phone every five minutes, which is unfortunate. I'm trying this thing that I actually did successfully when I was working on *Tomboy*. I did not look at my phone, or check my email, or really use my computer until I had already been working for around four hours, so I had this good solid chunk of time where my brain space wasn't taken up by anything else. And I've been doing that for the last week in the mornings. I feel a lot more productive and motivated, so I'm going to keep trying to do that. I do a lot of inking in front of like Food Network, or like, Netflix, or something. Cartoonists don't really get a lot of downtime...

MRR: Nope...
It's kind of a "working all of the time" kind of a thing, and so you know, I trick myself into thinking I'm relaxing by drawing while I'm watching TV.

MRR: I'm watching TV and my eyes glance up at the screen every a few minutes...
That's why *Gossip Girl* is like the best thing that you can possibly draw to, because it's basically just a radio drama. You don't need to look at it ever. You're just like, oh yeah, these beautiful New York sophisticate teenagers are arguing about sex again. I don't need to look at it, I can just hear it and be intrigued.

MRR: Totally, I would not have survived the last year of drawing comics if not for an Audible account. So looking through *Be Your Own Backing Band*, I was struck by the variety of compositions you have. The strips range from these tight twelve panel grids, to these more collage-like illustrations. Is there anything that informs or inspires how you approach a given given page?
It really just depends...I mean with the *If You Make It* comics, it's a website. They can be as long or as short as I want them to be. I can use color, or I don't have to. And that's why some of the stories at the beginning of the book are several pages long, or you know, like I think one of them I had to like fill the page with like extra stuff. I think the one where I saw Descendents at Fun Fun Fun Fest, I added a scan of the backstage pass that I had, because that comic just didn't fit. But with the *Razorcake* comics, I only have a page in every issue, and so it really just kind of depends on how much story I want to tell, versus how much space I have, and some of the more like, Illustrator-y ones are just me trying to take a different approach to using a page.


BIG EYES @ Death By Audio...
♫ I PREFER TO BE ALONE ♪
HUNCHBA
Goddamn, this band really speaks to me
BE ALONE, YEAH
It's like Kate can reach into my mind and tell exactly what I'm thinking
That's what I love about punk music: you can have an intimate experience being alone in a room full of people
HUNCHBAC
Or, if you're an asshole, you can have an intimate experience directly in front of the stage and force everyone to participate by proxy.
I PREFER TO BE ALONE
SLOBBER
GROPE
FONDLE
HUNC

MRR: Do you work well with that space constraint of having a one page limit for stories?
Yeah. I prefer it because I think it keeps me more concise. I don't know if people have noticed from this interview, but I can just *talk* at length about any subject. That's been one of the great things about doing these daily comics for Patreon is that I have to just be really concise.

MRR: Another thing I noticed that was sort of funny in *Be Your Own Backing Band* is some of the cartoonist meta-commentary in it. Like one of the strips towards the back, there's a thought-balloon in this one panel where you're riding a bike, and the balloon reads, "I love riding bikes, but I hate drawing bikes." Truth! That is the worst!
Yes. One of the comics that I did is about a friend coming over to work on my bike, and it's like sitting on the stoop drinking seltzers and he's saying like, "You just don't want to draw your bike, huh?" I was like, "Right!"

Like I said, writing comics for someone else to draw. I don't have to be like, "oh shit, I don't want to draw a bike." I could have tons of scenes where people are riding bikes in a comic that someone else is drawing cause I don't deal with it. Basically, comics, like everything in life, is about knowing your own limits and finding a clever way to work around them.

MRR: Did you have any stories for *Be Your Own Backing Band* or or even for your Patreon that's on the cutting room floor?
Not usually because unfortunately, even though I've been drawing these *Razorcake* comics for like six years, whenever one is due, it sneaks up on me. I'm never prepared for it. And so it just kind of becomes like, "Oh my god, I have to draw something!" I have like four days to crank this out, so there's no time or room for anything to end up on the cutting room floor. With something like a Patreon comics, there are tons of things that are just too long to fit into a three panel comic strip. I'd like to think that I'll eventually get around to drawing those.

MRR: You mentioned earlier about sort of being in punk retirement. That's something that I sometimes stress about myself as I get older. I was going ask the question if you find it hard to keep up with and stay engaged with the current punk scene, but I guess the answer to that is already yes. What is your level of engagement now? What is the last great record you listened to, or show that you checked out?
Well I have not been to a show in a pretty long time. But I also moved to Portland, Maine, and quite honestly there's not that many bands that come up here that I'm stoked about. There are some...there's this local-ish band, Wedding Camp, that's actually really great. They have two EPs and they're awesome. They played here a billion times since I've lived here, and I have not yet seen them. I'm hoping to rectify that situation. The new Caves record, *Always Why*, that came out earlier this year is really awesome. I keep coming back to that one. I just got into that new Roswell Kid album, *Precious Art*.

MRR: Finally, one of the awesome things about comics, as you were saying when talking about mailing out the comics for your Patreon, is that they really are sort of an ideal DIY art form, and they fit in so well with zine and punk culture. What is your advice to young comix punx with ink-stained fingers looking to either start out making comics, or make better, more consistent comics?
Just keep making them and keep reading them. I think that there's kind of this, especially with the internet...these kids and their internet...*[laughter]* I think that there is this propensity for people to think, like, "Oh, this person wrote a graphic novel. They must have just sat down one day and decided just do it, and they just did it." There wasn't like...years of working on comics in like obscurity, or in secret, or even just amongst their friends. I think people want to like skip that step of just experimenting and just doing a bunch of different kinds of work, and go straight to just being like, "Oh, how do I get Scholastic to publish my book?"

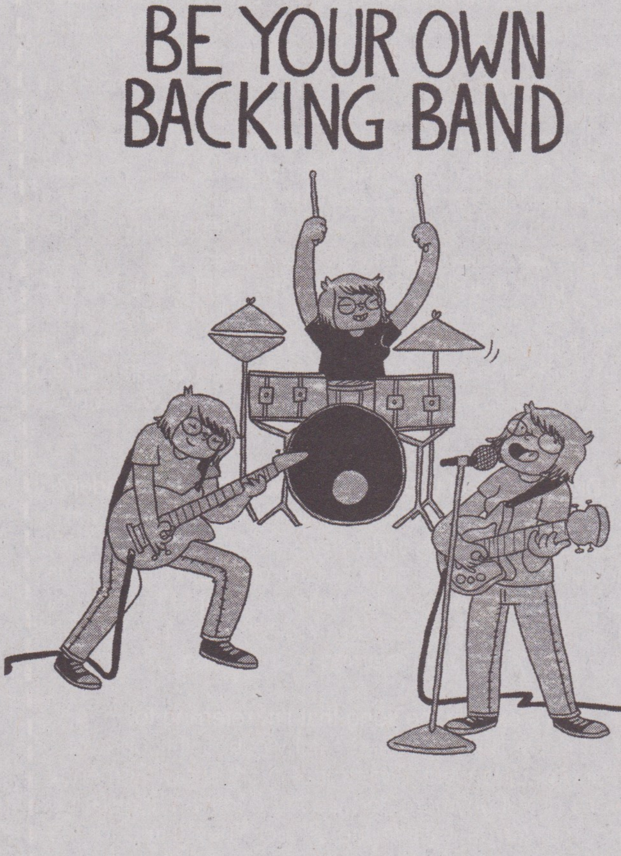
And I think that a lot of people don't realize that I've been drawing comics since I was ten years old. I self-published stuff, and I've gone to lots of conventions just having my own table with my Xeroxed books and meeting people. I think there's a lot of wisdom and value to be had in taking those steps.

Don't start out with your first comics project being like, a you know, twelve-hundred page epic. Start out with something short and noncommittal, so that you can decide halfway through, "You know what? This isn't working for me," and you're not destroying your life. *[laughter]*

MRR: You heard it here, from Liz. Don't destroy your life with comics!
Yeah, let comics enhance your life. Don't let them destroy your life...says the person who is currently having her life destroyed by a comics, and probably will forever.

MRR: They'll get you in the end.
They always get you.

Liz Prince's latest book Be Your Own Backing Band *is available through Silver Sprocket*



ABORTTI 13

Abortti 13 is a cult hardcore punk band from Finland. Abortti 13 was spawned in Kankaanpää in 1983, when the members meet each other as teens. They made a demo tape while still in high school and a year later a split 7" with Pyhäkoulu. During their short career, they only played a couple of chaotic gigs. Abortti 13 was then put on hold when the players decided to explore other things. In 2009 Abortti 13 was resurrected when Killer Records promised to release their material. Matti regrouped Abortti 13 and from that day they have released lot of records and played tons of furious gigs around Finland and Norway.

Interview by Sami Koskinen. Photos by Jaska K., Jaani, and J. Parkku

MRR: During the early '80s Abortti 13 made the legendary *Kankaanpää* demo, one split 7", and played a couple of gigs. From this you achieved a kind of "cult" status. Can you summarize your eighties legacy?

Tapsa: We stayed alive in the eighties, but our band not. In 1984 we were eighteen and in love with our youth. We were free and had big plans for the future that did not include Abortti 13. In the summer of 1984 we made a split EP with Pyhäkoulu to celebrate our breakup. Everyone went their own ways without looking back. Everything happened so fast those years. Bands came and passed. We didn't think that Abortti 13 would be anything more than a therapy group for us. We were the only punks in our school full of violent '50s street gangs. We lived in a little city with mostly narrow minded assholes. Two years was enough of that shit. I moved a year after that to Helsinki to continue my adulthood there. You summarized our eighties legacy already in the question with the word "legendary." I like that word, because legends do not die. In 1983 nobody started a punk band thinking that they would play forever. Abortti 13 was over in 18 months, but we showed to people that you don't have to have musical training to play in the band. You don't have to be rich or talented to make a vinyl record. We did it solely because we wanted to do it.

MRR: Did it ever feel that Abortti 13 was one hit wonder?

Tapsa: Some people seriously think that Chumbawamba is a one hit wonder too. They are so totally wrong. They do not know the whole story of Chumbawumba *or* Abortti 13. Our first song on our first tape was stupid but kind of catchy: "Suolia Saatana" ("*Guts fucking guts fucking guts fucking guts*"). Are you referring to that song?

MRR: ...that's exactly the song that I'm referring to.

Tapsa: People like stupid and catchy songs. It is our worst song and people want to hear it at every show. Someday we won't play it anymore and we hope that an angry mob will not murder us outside the venue. They came to see a band with just one catchy song! *[laughter]* Many bands have a song that the audience likes more than band. Many times that song is stupid, catchy, and easy to sing even when you are drunk. I have always loved to entertain people, even though I can't sing or tell funny jokes. I don't have musical genes, but I noticed at an early age that with some charisma and madness you could make people have good time just by bluffing that you are talented in some way (every con-artist knows that). But the most important thing of all is to put your heart in everything that you do.

MRR: Abortti 13 was broken up for many years. What gave you the motivation to start again?

Matti: Our love to play punk rock. Rami (from Killer Records) was thinking about reissuing our *Lapsuusmuistoja* EP, but the original tapes are missing. Korkki and I started talking about rerecording the Abortti 13 back catalogue. After a few practice sessions with Jaani, we lured Tapsa in the studio with us and we recorded fourteen songs. It felt great! The *Viimeinen Verilöyly* EP got a nice response too. The first 500 copies were sold very quickly.

Tapsa: At first, I was against stupid reunions. Some bands were so pathetic trying to look like 30 years younger while bearing all the marks of aging, such as being bald, having a beer belly, and wearing too small of a leather jacket. They usually aren't even involved in punk! Normally they work in an office. Some bands ruined their own memory by doing that. I used to get angry at people who asked me about when Abortti 13 would make a comeback. I tried to promote my other bands but no, people were more interested in yesterday's news. Matti called me and asked me to join them in the studio to sing our old set for a new 7" EP. When he told me that it won't cost me anything I instantly said "yes!" Especially since Killer Records was going to release it. I was already making new songs and thinking that time is right to pick up where we left things 25 years earlier.

MRR: Some original members from the '80s lineup did not come back. What happened to them?

Tapsa: Abortti 13 was already broke up when we were making the *Lapsuusmuistoja* EP and our guitar player didn't even come to studio because he had lost interest in the band. We had Kaaos vocalist Jakke with us as a map reader to help us find the studio in the backwoods of Ruutana. We had become good friends during the year and he said he could play guitar on our tracks. He learned them right away and then we recorded them. They are easy songs to play by anybody's standards. After 45 minutes I thought they were ready, 'cause they sounded good on the studio speakers. It was our first time in the studio and didn't know shit. We recorded four songs, but for the EP our song "Uhri" was quickly changed to "Veteraani." We didn't want to people think that we have only slow songs (such as "Suolia Saatana" and "Professori Balthasar"). Being fast was at that point an essential thing to us.

I found an old letter a year ago from Jake (from Rattus) where he promised to come to studio with us as producer. I don't remember anything about that and why it didn't happen. But it would have sounded different with him. Jakke was the right dude for this kind of job. He was not so excited for our "we don't care, it's in the can" type of thinking and asked us to credit him as "Jacques" on cover. It was so raw and untalented even for Jakke's ears.

Matti: Our original drummer Markku was not interested in the reunion. Perhaps he was too busy grinding sausage in the meat factory where he works? Our guitarist Antti is almost an original member, he played the few gigs with us back then.

MRR: Abortti 13 players has been active in many bands and projects, can you tell something about them?

Pete: I've played in Sätkynukke, Rampton Twins, Turun Tauti, Kiima, Sasquatch, and Biopsy.

Tapsa: I had a guitar / noise punk band called Monotonics in 1990s with some eighties hardcore veterans like Pati (from Sunset Brigade—RIP) and Janne (Irstas, Amazing Tails). They started the band as Clash-style group and asked me to play bass, even I didn't know how to play it. I was their Paul Simonon. After a couple of years we became a really good band who had fans in the Danish *Moshable* zine and the *Mutiny* zine in Finland. Our first 7" was played on the radio by the legendary Miettinen in his great Räkärodeo show. The Danish wrote about us as a next big thing in 1996, but we didn't take any positive comments as what they were. We somehow thought that they were fucking with us and we found a much more interesting hobby: heroin. We made every possible mistake you could ever dream of until we broke in 2001. Crackwhore was our new name. With a lineup change we have played together ever since. Some people called us the Finnish answer to Turbonegro or early Hellacopters. Some people thought we're some kinda freak circus. Now sixteen years later we are a cult band with some die-hard fans. I have been in many other bands, but those are the most important projects to me.

Matti: Marko drums for Juggling Jugulars, which formed in 1989. Antti has played in various cool rock'n'roll bands. For example: Tiger 61, Glad Genitals. Blitzkrieg Boys. I've played in Teologia, Valjakka LA (who also made two EPs under the name Flying Pizza).

MRR: You have lifted some tracks for Abortti 13 from various projects. Which songs, and why?

Pete: Think of it as recycling. We have some good tunes that hadn't made to records and would have been pity to waste. I've only recycled the tunes I've made in previous bands, so I'm not ripping off anyone.

Matti: Although new tracks keep coming, we love to dig our creepy vaults of our forgotten bands and music.

MRR: Nowadays punk is split into various subgenres, groups, etc. Can you tell how you see Abortti 13 positioned in Finnish punk scene?

Pete: Just punk rock, I don't care about subgenres really, except maybe only '77 / anarcho- / hardcore.

Tapsa: Abortti 13 is a 100% punk rock band, nothing more, nothing less. Everything we play comes out as Abortti 13. We do not even know of all these different subgenres, nor are we interested in them. Good music is good music and shit is shit. Never mind the genres. They just keep your mind too limited to accept different music styles. I listen to lots of other music than punk rock. Sometimes the best ideas come from outside of your favorite music genres.

MRR: Punk was originally an angry youth movement. The average age of a member in Abortti 13 is around 50, so how do you see yourself among angry youth?

Tapsa: I am an angry old man who looks twenty years younger than I am. I am always excited about a younger audience, they have more energy. In punk, age doesn't mean shit. Twentysomethings are smarter than I was at their age and there are fifty-year-olds who haven't grown or learned anything 'cause they have been stupid idiots all of their life. Some of them think that young punks don't know anything about punk. Some try to learn how to be a punk and some people just are born to be punks. People are different as they should be. They should use their own head instead of someone's else. I have always been a really social guy who have more friends than braincells.

Matti: I'd like to think we still fit in the crowd, even though we have missing hair, missing teeth, and wrinkly skin because punk still rules.

MRR: Do you see your age mirrored in audience? Does it matter?

Pete: Doesn't matter to me and I don't think that our audience takes any notice either.

Tapsa: When you are on stage, the audience is more of a mirror to your own emotions. During every show I try to give some more of myself to the audience, digging deeper and deeper. It's some kind a weird ritual or a learning process. The thirty minutes we spend on stage seems to happen in a different dimension with its own time and space limits.

MRR: This seems like the way black metal guys describe their kvlt live rituals. Any comment about that?

Tapsa: I don't know much about the metal scene, but I think they are very intense. We don't need fake blood, lamb blood or any fuckin' circus gimmicks. Punk shows at their best are live rituals that could cleanse your soul. They certainly purify mine. When I have screamed and shouted all the shit out of my system during a set, it makes me feel great. Much better than Xanax.

Only one person is needed to say that they liked the gig to make it worth performing, even if we go without gas, money, or food. It has been nice to see that people who don't normally care about punk music come to say after the show how they enjoyed it a lot. That means a lot for me.

MRR: How do you get along with younger bands?

Pete: Mostly just fine, but I have met a few younger bands that act like wannabe rockstars, snobs with expensive equipment and trained skills. They look down other bands who have cheap equipment and poor skills. But luckily there's only a few of them.

Tapsa: I love to play shows, no matter how old or young they are. Older bands are often more experienced and more professional, but some of these young bands have energy and enough of their own style to be more interesting than the older bands.

MRR: How do you see scene today?

Pete: Sadly, I see it divided many times over. You must not disagree and have your own opinions. There are "punks" who won't tolerate different punks from themselves.

For example, my friend who had a mohawk went to a skate punk gig and got pushed around. These people said "This is a skate punk gig, you're a hardcore punk and don't belong here, go away." What pitiful bullshit! This is why I don't like subgenre labels. Some people use them to divide the punk scene.

Tapsa: During the eighties in Finland there were only a couple of hundred punks. We were a big family. Punks who were in the scene only for a fashion didn't usually last long, considering we'd get beaten up every week. So they found something safer to do. In hardcore years, so-called "normal" people, police, and youth organizations were really scared of us. They responded with violence and ignorance to our looks and way of life. That changed when the early 1990s punk bands in the USA started to sell more than the normal mainstream shit. With mainstream crowds came some assholes who didn't know about our punk ways With the masses came a money flow. Nobody could expect in 1990 what was going to happen in next year. I smelled it in air in the USA in spring 1989 with new bands like Melvins, who had started as a more hardcore-influenced band. These bands had grown their sound into something new. After 1991 punk made its way to mainstream audiences. Nowadays everybody thinks they know everything about punk.

No one is scared of punks anymore. People love the aesthetic more than the culture. The color of your hair gets more likes than baseball bats...which is okay because I don't miss the violence in the punk scene. Who really misses it? Punk could never mix with fame and fortune. Joe Strummer and Kurt Cobain had fallen into a same style of shithole.

Strummer saw only a glimpse of fame and fortune and it almost broke him. Kurt saw to the bottom and lost his head. He was only one year younger than me.

MRR: What are the differences between the Finnish punk scene in the early eighties and now?

Pete: Back then, people were more united. We spent time together and made things together. Nowadays it's just small groups here and there. Only a few people are putting on gigs, etc. Most people just enjoy or complain about what a few people have created. It's mostly lazy people. From active participation to passivity.

MRR: One thing which comes to mind when remembering the eighties scene is the use of alcohol and other substances. Many old scene notables have left us because of this lately. There were not many straightedge people among small town punks. Memories (or lack of them) about this or comments?

Tapsa: I was an alcoholic for almost ten years but it was such a different time. Fists and kicks don't hurt so much when you are drunk. The doctor asked me stop drinking after I had serious liver failure, so i made some changes in my life style. Nowadays people smoke more pot instead of booze which is a good thing, as that means less violence and stupid behavior.

Matti: Going to gigs and parties with a load of alcohol was the norm. Some of the memories are just not there.

MRR: ...so lot of memories without memory. Hardcore punk was a new radical youth movement with ironically very traditional (for Finland at least) ways of alcohol abuse. Why? What's the situation nowadays in Finnish punk scene?

Matti: It was a new movement, but with a pinch of traditional ways. In Finland alcohol has always been a big part of youths' freetime, and punks certainly followed that trend. A certain decadent image was a part of shocking people. When you made X amount of *kilju* (home made brew—drank by lot of punks in '80s), you'd have to drink X amount of *kilju*. Today gigs are mostly in bars and pubs so it has affected a lot in people's behavior. Sad to say, I don't know what underaged punks do or how much they drink. Hopefully creating angry, loud, and in your face punk music somewhere with *kilju* brewing in some corner.

MRR: You have some controversial lyrics recorded like

"Pillu On Yäk" ("Pussy Is Gross"), "Hipit" ("Hippies") and so on? Any response from the politically correct punk scene for these?

Pete: They are not so serious songs. They have sarcasm or irony, the opposite of serious political songs from some other bands. Some people have been pissed off because of those lyrics. It's OK for NOFX to sing about beating up hippies, but not ok for us. There are hypocritical double standards among punk.

Tapsa: We are not a funny band. we are serious as shit. Sometimes we have some funny things in lyrics but they are more Flipper-style funny. Pitch black, dark, and nihilistic. Angry Samoans, Fang, and some other bands have same style sense of humor in their lyrics. This kind of humor makes you cry more so than laugh. Flipper made a big influence on me after hearing "Ha Ha Ha" in the *Let Them Eat Jellybeans* compilation. Some lyrics have offended people who have no self-criticism or take the whole punk thing much too seriously. "Hipit" was our drummer's lyrics from 1983 which I thought were funny. The punks beating up hippies idea has always been more about expression than really beating up hippies. Some people didn't get that joke, even if they had lived in punk scene for their whole lives. We recorded that song stoned on weed and making fun of our own hippie lifestyle inside this, very serious punk scene. Fuck political correctness! Fuck the taboos! Too many take things too seriously. And I don't believe that it is totally harmless. Nazis took things too seriously also.

Matti: "Pillu On Yäk" I see as a love song. It's a satirical song, written by our drummer when he was 17. A young man loves women too much and can't handle the emotions, so he is processing his feelings through hate.

MRR: There is epic song in *Kansa Taisteli* EP called "Kastroitu Leijona" ("Castrated Lion"). It is about right-wing / neo-nazi movements popular in Finland today. Can you expand on this subject more? The song also includes the line "I don't want to watch ice hockey, because it is too political." Can you elaborate on this?

Tapsa: A friend of mine paid me a visit about year ago during ice hockey world cup. I don't watch hockey myself but I asked him if he did. He told me without hesitation, fingers crossed over his eyes, that he can't watch it anymore because it had become too political. I was stunned at how great of a line that was. I thought over that line and started to write some lyrics to flesh out the idea. The Finnish lion has been the logo of the Finnish national ice hockey team for a long time. A couple of years ago everyone bought this Finnish lion on their t-shirts and jewelry. Some even got it tattooed. then right-wing neo-nazis and worried patriotic Finnish people started to wear it in their rallies. Growing hate towards foreign people got very serious. Even some old punks joined this "Keep Finland White" movement. I felt sick thinking about that old Finnish symbol being used as a patriotic propagandic tool. Even ice hockey had became a tool. I have been into football all my life, but I played hockey in school. It is a sport. It should not be a channel for racist fanatics.

MRR: "Kansa Taisteli"—maybe a younger and foreign audience won't know the meaning of this satirical song. Can you explain it further?

Pete: It's about "those brave men who fought the Soviet Union during World War II". Fight for your fatherland theme. I have mixed feelings about it. I hate war and fighting, but it was good that they kicked Stalin's ass and saved Finland from the same fate what happened to the Baltic countries and others who fell under Soviet oppression.

Tapsa: "Kansa Taisteli" is our drummer's vision about people who believe that the Holocaust never happened. There's a lot of people who believe that, even in Germany. They seriously believe that six million Jews never died. They even believe that Auschwitz was not an extermination camp and other neo-nazi bullshit.

MRR: Is punk dead and buried as you sing?

Pete: I take it as a provocative lyrics against those subgenre dividing punks, as I mentioned above. The intolerance for change within punk scene... it's all dead. That's what it means to me. Unite not divide. The world changes. Things have been better and worse. Sometimes I feel like there's not so much "need" for a punk movement, in Finland anyway. Then again, there's always shit things popping up around that gives punk a reason to exist. Like another cold war is on our hands nowadays, etc.

Tapsa: "*Punk is dead and I killed the fuck / it was a way too old and it really sucked*" ("Punk On Kuollut"). As long as our world is a fucked up place quickly getting closer to ending, as long we have war and misery everywhere, and the big evil corporations sucking last pennies of poor mankind for their pockets...As long as everything's fucked, there will be a social need for punk. Our planet is dying. We need new ways of getting energy...In a near future, maybe people will drive cars that will use punk as a fuel. *[laughter]* It will save us all. It lives in our hearts and it is inner voice you hear which wants you to break our broken laws. Punk won't die as long we keep it alive. But how long do we want to do that? *[laughter]*

MRR: What do you still want to achieve with Abortti 13?

Pete: More gigs, more records, and more fun. Playing punk rock means everything to me.

Tapsa: I want to achieve so much more. I am stressed, 'cause my time is running out. I want to make so much more....more than anyone could think possible. I want to be the voice of Finland after I'm gone. The music of Abortti 13 will become a musical genre in 2067 but then what? Do i get my own statue? How about Marko? Will cars use punk as energy to move? Is our next record an answer to everything? Will they play it on the radio?

abortti13.bandcamp.com

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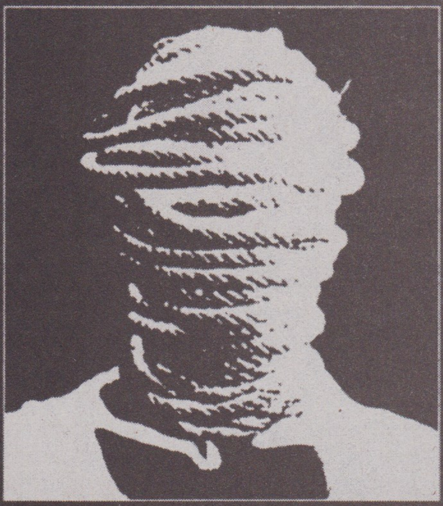

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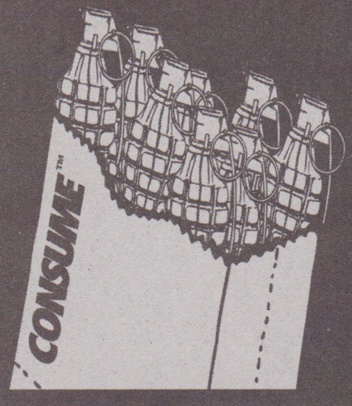

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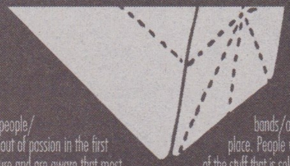

We like to meet people/bands/art/sport/etc. that do what they do out of passion in the first place. People who believe in a underground culture and are aware that most of the stuff that is sold nowadays under that flag is total crap only made to make money. And, if you feel you can write and relate, get in touch. To put it with Fugazi's words:

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PERVERTS AGAIN

Interview and introduction by Christina Pap.
Photos provided by Austin Roberts, Em Demarco, Connie Voltaire, and Cece Manning.

Perverts Again are a punk band, coming out of a new wave of weirdos from Cleveland, Ohio. They play simple and snotty punk but more in the way of four people with lobotomies trying to put together a song that is constantly on the edge of crumbling apart. You fall through the songs and end up feeling as insane as when you listen to other mid to slow tempo punk bands like Brainbombs or Flipper. It makes you wanna dance a bit and it numbs your brain, just like walking through life on this bleak rock, and they talk about all the little things you gotta deal with and do to make it through too with song titles such as “I Don’t Want A Phone!”, “You’re Not Taking Me To Prom” and “My Accident.”

Their debut LP My Big Party *came out in 2015 on Non Commercial Records, and a small reissue will be out by the time this goes to print. If you missed out the first time don’t make that mistake again. They’ve just released a 7” on Total Punk and have a second LP in the works.*

If you have read my writing before or talked to me drunk or sober there’s a very big chance I’ve talked your ear off about this band, and here I am again to do the same thing. Perverts Again is Alex on vocals, Nathan on drums, Jo on the guitar, and Mike on bass. They’re childhood friends that have been through a number of different bands over the years to now end up in their most shambolic but successful endeavor. Alex answered a few questions to fill us in on the details.

MRR: Perverts Again isn’t your first band together—how did you all initially start jamming?

Alex: Me, Nathan, and Mike have been friends since 2nd grade, and Jo went to St. Angela’s so we didn’t meet him until his parents got really poor and had to send him to public school. He has caught a lot of flack for living in a big colonial on a cul-du-sac but he inherited that damn house. When we were in 7th grade, Nathan saw him wearing a Social Distortion shirt and asked him if he wants to be the drummer. He had to take extra lessons with his drum teacher, Bubba, but it paid off because now he can play several different beats. We’ve been playing in bands since 2006. The first band was Li’l Murphys, a Dropkick Murphys cover band.

MRR: How did Perverts Again come out of that?

The transition from Li’l Murphys to Perverts Again took about ten years. We morphed into an Oi! Band with some ska parts called Riot Boys, which was a disaster but made us tough as nails because everyone made fun of it. A local punk once told us Riot Boys needs to write *real* songs with *real* chords. We started trying being a serious band but it was really stale and not fun at all. We decided to do Cruelster when we all moved in together on the east side. We’re a simple punk band where Mike (AKA Yes-Yes) could be the blonde singer, me and Nathan could be the matching twins on either side of him, and Jo would still drum. We made records and toured plenty. We started playing way too many shows in Cleveland because there weren’t many bands at the time. So we changed around the lineup and each switched to instruments that we couldn’t play, called it Perverts Again, and this way we were able to at least be a different band when we played different shows.

MRR: Would you say Cruelster has now taken more of a backseat? Why?

Perverts Again just feels more fresh because all the instruments are newer to us, and we have been regularly writing new music. When Cruelster writes new songs it takes me a while to learn them so we just end up playing old songs. We are sitting on a new Cruelster LP but waiting for the right time to release it.

MRR: How did you find your way into the Cleveland punk scene?
We played Now That's Class a lot with one of our pre-Cruelster bands, but Mike and Nathan's band Smooth Brain sort of bridged the gap to playing better shows with better bands and new people. And pretty much all it takes to "join" the Cleveland punk scene, for better or for worse, is to play a lot of shows and go to a lot of shows at Now That's Class. Nobody has to get bullied or ridiculed like we used to, which I guess is good. I remember one time this band wrote a song about us and played it while opening for the Casualties, and we were a joke to everyone for a while. But now we have 975 Facebook likes, so who's laughing now?

CRUELSTER

MRR: What's the biggest difference for you between Cruelster and Perverts Again?
Cruelster is a fast, punk slopfest, which I think is a little more on the hardcore spectrum (among many other spectrums), while Perverts Again is more of its own thing. Perverts Again sounds antagonistic, but Cruelster actually *is* antagonistic. We really like to bother people from a distance and not deal with the consequences. Cruelster made some controversial PR moves in recent years that we have been trying to back away from (Fiorina endorsements, American Sniper obsessions) and a lot of fans are just feeling betrayed right now. I like Perverts Again because we can play more diverse shows and I like to march.

PERVERTS AGAIN

MRR: If you were to describe Perverts Again not using musical references, what would you say you sounded like?
A caveman who has gotten an unexplained glimpse of society thousands of years in the future is trying to pick up the pieces of his life while struggling with his forbidden knowledge. His wife, or clan-mate, can sense something is wrong, but he doesn't want to talk about it, because not only is he severely disturbed and confused, but cavemen cannot talk. Later that night, a rival tribe discovers their camp, and they use guns and chemical weapons to slaughter the caveman and his family. As the heavily armed rival tribe walks away from the carnage, the caveman lies still, dying, wondering how the future he'd glimpsed had caught up to those tribesmen.

MRR: Initially you all worked together doing Turbine Piss Records in order to put out your own bands' releases. Now that other labels are stepping in, is Turbine Piss going to the grave in order for you to focus more on your other artistic projects?
Probably, only because we have so much other stuff going on, and we have enough interest in our other projects. We still use it as a blog, and we'll probably never formally "end" it, but starting and maintaining a label isn't all that interesting to us. Anything we self-release will come out on Turbine Piss but now that we're getting closer and closer to True Fame I'm not sure we'll ever need it. There are enough tiny labels with tiny little webstores and plus we do a bad job of shipping things that people buy, which anyone who has ever bought something from us online can attest to. Last week I got an angry email from someone who never got their $1 tape they ordered in 2014!

MRR: What do you all do (creatively or not) when not doing PA?
Mike, Jo, and Nathan are in a ton of bands such as Vanilla Poppers, Bulsch, Know-So (12" coming out on Neck Chop Records in a few months), Roobydocks, Real Regular, and Prison Moan. Mike also does a lot of recording local bands. I'm a librarian in grad school and I write a lot of novels. I'm self-publishing my first one, Wet Concrete, this summer, and hopefully I'll be able to take it on our tour. I'm also doing a novelization of our next album, *Friday Night Light*, which will be available on this summer's tour. Nathan makes comics, and has had stuff here in *Maxiumum Rocknroll* and a bunch of other places, along with tons of flyers and album covers (recently Citric Dummies, Fried Egg). His own comics include *Fun-O-Planet*, *Pus*, and *Warpwish Comix*.

MRR: How was it working with the notorious Paul E Wog from Non Commercial on the release of your debut LP *Our Big Party*?
He's actually re-releasing *Our Big Party* with an alternate cover this summer! It's going to be a kid friendly edition with censored lyrics. But yeah, it was so nice to work with Paul. He took us up to his apartment above Now That's Class to tell us what was what. He explained to us not to let him down, and that if we embarrass him, that will be the end of us. He was also very angry when he found out Nathan's girlfriend was pregnant, as he did not authorize the propagation. He likes to get very close to our faces and say, "I own you!"

MRR: I heard you had to cut a track or two from the final LP. Does it make a difference to you? Do you view the songs on the LP as separate songs or all the songs work together to create *Our Big Party*?
Our Big Party is mostly separate songs, without much overlap. Most of the songs had already been demos or on comps, plus some news ones, so we just re-recorded everything for a more

cohesive sound. Our next album, *Friday Night Light* which comes out soon on Total Punk, is much more conceptual, and it sort of tells its own crappy story. Like I said, I'm doing a novelization, which is the strangest thing I've ever written and I don't know who would possibly find it appealing.

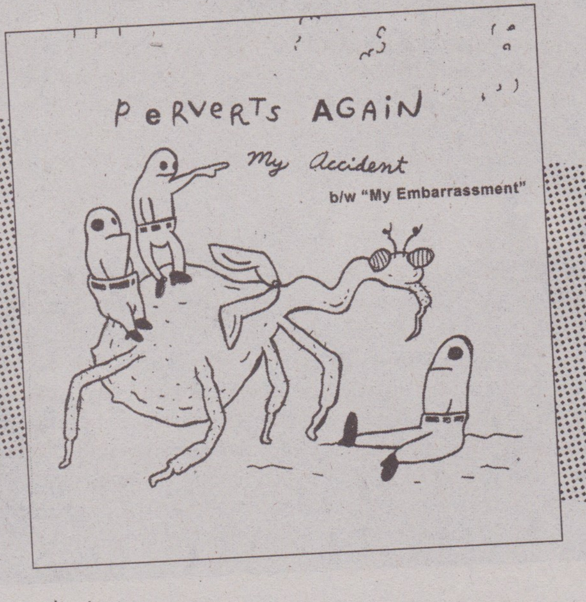
MRR: Perverts Again doesn't have the "hardcore punk" sound Cleveland is more known for outside its borders, but definitely fits in with a weirder punk Cleveland has plenty of hidden under the surface. Where do you draw musical inspiration from?
I mostly have bad taste in music (Agnostic Front, Avail, Rancid) but I also listen to a lot of Ramones and Dark Day and Chrome and Counter-Intuits. But I don't really try to sound like anything with Perverts Again, I just talk-sing whatever sounds good to me / us. People make comparisons but when it all comes down to it, we're just a mid-tempo version of Cruelster with Eminem-style vocals.

MRR: More and more I hear people talking about the greatness of the *Our Big Party* LP. Cruelster did a big tour about a year ago, is anything similar in the cards for Perverts Again?
Cruelster probably won't tour until our second album is out, which won't be for a while. But Perverts Again is going west, so you can go to turbinepiss.blogspot.com for dates. If you live on the East coast, we'll drive out to any show, as long as it's less than fourteen hours away. Since the same people are in both bands, sometimes we'll do a double set if the person booking the show feels like making a big mistake.

MRR: "Brute in the Bathroom" is about someone walking in on you in the toilet but then choking to death as a consequence of an action that usually has no consequences (seeing you go number two). Why is walking in on someone in the bathroom one of the worst things a person can do? What else are your lyrics a reflection of?
It's just really rude. Whenever I go to the bathroom, I always assume there is someone in the stall. I'll either knock, or push the door a little bit, to see if I get a push back. But some people just barge in, and then they laugh at you because they're watching you do something embarrassing, when they're the ones who put themselves in that situation. A lot of our lyrics have meaning, like "You're Not Taking Me To Prom" is about guys who think that sex is a reward they can earn, and "Long Legger" on the new album is about known rapists getting a free pass because they're so nice and cool and popular. (Oh, and that being said, "Perverts Again" is an exclamation, not a description; *we* are not the perverts, but we're the ones announcing their return.) But I do want to say "Bald Spot Boy" is not about anyone or anything, unlike what a lot of bald people think. I just remember this kid on my tee-ball team took off his hat and there was a weird bald spot in the middle of his head. So I guess that's what it's about!

MRR: Why is "My Big Party" (the song) such a painful mess?
Nathan demanded we write our answer to "I Love College" by Asher Roth. It was hard to write because we decided going in that we wanted it to be *really* long.

MRR: How do you feel you fit in amongst the other active punk bands? Any shout outs of local bands you recommend the uneducated check out?
I'm not sure how we fit in right now, a lot of bands sound pretty different from each other around here lately, but a lot of us are in a lot of the active bands too. People ask us to play shows and then watch when we play and then buy records so I think it's OK. It's hard recommending bands because we always miss someone but some of the ones worth your time are Shitblimp, Yambag, Christmas Pets, Pig Flayer, Brainwashed California, Vanilla Poppers, Cotton Ponys, the Cowboy...There seem to be a lot of bands "in the works" right now that we are excited about. Real Regular is amazing too. We did a combo set with them a couple of Christmasses ago that was very annoying and someone should have recorded it and released it on a record but nobody did that so that was their very big mistake.



MRR: What's your favorite Perverts Again song?
Of the ones we have released so far, I like "My Accident" the most (from the Total Punk 7"), but my real favorite is "Long Legger" on the upcoming new LP, which can only be heard live for now. We also have a song on the new album called "Blockbusted" about when Yes-Yes thought he got kicked out of Blockbuster in 2005 for dressing punk—he wrote the title around that time but we never really fleshed out the lyrics until now. It's a really important song for the punk community...

pervertsagain.bandcamp.com

DIAGNOSIS? BASTARD!

Diagnosis? Bastard! are a fast-playing international hardcore punk band based in Sweden. Aside from an apparent love for punctuation marks, Diagnosis? Bastard! is all about straight-up, furious punk rock, with no bullshit. Having already released two seven inches through D-Takt och Råpunk and La Familia Records, as well as a split tape with Hello Bastards on Ljudkassett and a self-released tape, they recently released their first LP on Kink Records from Germany. Aaaaaaarrrrgh!

Interview by Fredrik Kullman. Photos by Stefan Fagerberg and Mia Mollberg

MRR: When/how did you guys form?
Lucas: We started the band in 2012. Gareth and Viktor wanted to start a band since Nitad and Victims were not doing much back then. I had been living in Sweden for about a year and was dying to start a new band. Viktor called me and asked if I wanted to join the band they were starting. I knew Viktor since when Nitad toured Brazil with my old band Avalanche back in 2008. Gareth played with Kev before and since their old band split up they had been talking about having something together. I didn't know Kev. I met him for the first time when we first practiced with him. It was very good timing for everyone and it didn't take us long to put some songs together and record something. We released our first 7" with the first five songs we ever wrote. Not much fine tuning or experimenting with our sound. Perhaps that's why our sound changed a bit through our records. We explored and found different things we like as we went.

MRR: Tell me about your older bands.
Viktor: I've played in a whole bunch over the years. A couple of which being Nitad who played hardcore and punk in Swedish and Sonic Ritual which was some kind of metal / punk.
Gareth: I've been playing in bands since I was 13 and been touring since I was about 17. My first band was called Morphene, which was pretty bad metal. Since then I've played in Sect, Soul Cellar, Raging Speedhorn, Rowdy Ramblers, Battle of Santiago, and Victims. Still playing in Victims.
Lucas: My first band was a Beatles cover band when I was 12. It was all downhill from there. I played in Iosf, Alliance, and Avalanche, all from Belo Horizonte / Brazil.
BK: I've been in a lot of bands because I'm pretty old! In the late '80s / early '90s I lived in Nottingham and I did a band called Bloody Lovely who were a kind of budget version of Gwar but for some reason we were pretty popular with the local kids and students. Then I was in Skin Limit Show which is where I met Sean, we then left to form Hard To Swallow and later 666Dead with Kalv and Steve of Heresy. Both of those bands were pretty wild times and it all ended in blood and tears. I was also in Helvis. In 99 I moved to London and formed Dead Inside with Paul Symes and we did pretty well on the underground UK hardcore scene of the time, we played a lot of gigs, toured Japan and released a few records but were only together around two years. After this I did a series of bands with Karl (ex of Tribute): Wives Of Seth, Shackle Me Not, Spectra Hawk, and Regimes. My mate found a bass guitar laying in the middle of the road and gave it to me, It became known as "Street Bass" and I became a bass player in the noise punx style as I'm shit at playing and can use a lot of distortion. I Like Bugs, Disculpe, and I'll Piss In Your Mouth were my bass bands. Oh yeah I did a stint in Raging Speedhorn as well but I try not to talk about that.

MRR: What's different with Diagnosis? Bastard! compared to your other bands?
Viktor: More than anything it's a lot calmer. Less chaos and bullshit but that's probably more to do with aging than anything else.
Gareth: It's a thousand times faster. A thousand times artsy-fartsier.
Lucas: The language I speak with them, the instrument I play, and the weather outside. We bully each other a lot less than we did in other bands I had too.
BK: Firstly we seem a lot more stable than those previous bands and will keep going strong for a while longer I hope or until I retire. And obviously for me the rest of the guys live in Stockholm and I live in London. Also we've been together long enough for me to see a good natural progression and improvement in our sound.

MRR: Where does the name come from?
BK: We were in need of a band name and we were going around and around in circles trying to find one. I was home one afternoon just hanging out pretty much doing nothing, when the old TV program *Diagnosis Murder* came on. I tend to talk and comment out loud to the TV when I'm alone and was getting annoyed at one of the characters, calling him a idiot and other such niceties, when eventually I decided he was an utter bastard. My diagnosis was bastard. So there you go.
Gareth: With some of the previous things Kev had called his bands we promised ourselves that we wouldn't let Kev name this one. It didn't work out that way.

MRR: How was life growing up?
Viktor: I grew up in a suburb outside of Stockholm called Viksjö. It was a pretty normal life until punk rock saved me.
Gareth: I come from a small industrial town in England called Corby. They call it Little Glasgow because of all the Scottish immigrants who came for the steel works, which employed over half the town. They closed during the '80s and the place become pretty much a dystopia after that. Sky high unemployment, drugs, alcoholism, murder...A recent survey showed Corby as the most depressing place to live in the UK. I thought it was OK until I realized at about thirteen that it wasn't. Had a great family though.
Lucas: I come from Sepultura and Sarcófago's city in the southeast of Brazil. Apart from skating in a big city, I grew up swimming in waterfalls and jumping off rocks.
BK: It was pretty normal. My mum and dad were just typical hardworking people who did all they could for me and my brother, despite us not appreciating it. My home town was a small market town in Nottinghamshire called Retford. I was very lucky in that it had a healthy alternative music scene due to a nightclub called the Porterhouse (now sadly gone) which through the '70s–'90s had a lot of really great touring bands through. The list of names who played there is pretty unbelievable for such a small down. I saw a lot of great bands there but I was unfortunately to young to see the likes of Black Flag, Discharge, AC/DC or Iron Maiden there.

MRR: When was the first time you came in contact with punk?
Viktor: My dad's Ebba Grön tape was my first contact with it and then that grew into a love of other Swedish, but first and foremost English punk like the Ruts and Sex Pistols!
Gareth: My best mate Leon, who played bass in Sect, got a hold of Damaged by Black Flag. I was sold just on the cover. Black Flag opened me up to the rest of the hardcore scene from the US and I was totally hooked.
Lucas: Skating I was fairly young. I remember bumping into mohawk-punks when I was 8 or 9, skating with friends on the local square.
BK: I can remember being out in town on a Saturday afternoon, shopping with my Mum, I reckon it would have been around 1977 or so and there was a huge gang of punks hanging outside the Porterhouse. I remember being totally terrified and fascinated all at the same time, I didn't know what they were but I knew I liked them. After that punks were a regular sight around town.

MRR: How did life change after you discovered punk?
Lucas: Without punk I would probably not have created as much as I did throughout my life. Punk had an impact on pretty much everything I did in my life.
Gareth: Punk and the DIY ethic formed the basic principles and morals by which I lead my life today. I was just a kid in a shitkicker town in England with limited access to much of this stuff via the normal social channels. My family were died-in-the-wool, working class socialists, but they taught me nothing about social equality for the vast demographic outside of working class white males. Not that that's a criticism of my family, that world we're from is pretty enclosed. Besides that stuff, it's the usual really, punk made me realize that I didn't have to be fucking Slash to play guitar in a band, and that there were bands singing about far more interesting subjects than sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll, which bores the piss out of me.

MRR: What was the first gig you went to?
Viktor: The first one I remember was probably Metallica and Suicidal Tendencies in '93. I got totally sucked into the whole mosh thing when Suicidal played.
Gareth: Officially my first gig was the Shadows with Hank Marvin and the gang, when I was 4. Their drummer Brian was a family friend. They were fucking magic! Still love them. My first "real" gig was Metallica '91. Dad took me and my mate even though he wasn't really into it. He liked "Nothing Else Matters" but that was about it. They were great though! Still the loudest gig I have ever been too! Another massively important gig for me, not long after I'd heard Damaged, was Kev's old band Hard to Swallow. It was their first ever show, must have been '95? It was then that I discovered another level of hardcore. BK was insane on stage then. Never would have guessed we'd play in bands together later on.
Lucas: My first punk gig was with my skate crew and the parents of one of them since we were all too young to be there on our own.
BK: Michael Schenker Group at Sheffield City Hall in Sept 1980. I was 12.

MRR: Two of you are immigrants living in Sweden. How does Sweden differ from your home country?
Gareth: For the most part, Sweden is much calmer. I noticed that the first time I was here, that you didn't have to be on your guard all the time! Unlike home. But that kind of shit is probably more of a universal small town thing, rather than a difference in national culture. The other difference is that in England, "chips" means french fries.
Lucas: It's a lot more quiet here. And less violent.

MRR: Can you two talk about what made your home countries more violent and what sort of violent situations you had been in?
Lucas: There are the obvious differences between Northern Europe and a third world country and all the impact that years of exploitation caused on every level of Brazilian society. The effects of extreme poverty living next door to extreme wealth with a big dose of corruption and neoliberal policies makes the whole thing explosive. I was robbed for the first time when I was around ten, when I was skating at a park close to home. Other than that I've had several street encounters including having to hide under a car during a shootout and having a gun pointed at my face by the police to name a few. I can't really think of any of this happening to me in Sweden.
Gareth: My experience growing up is slightly different to Lucas as far as observing extreme poverty and wealth side by side. But my home town was a depressing place growing up, which I became more aware of the older I got of course. There were a lot of gang wars between drug dealers in my town with some pretty gruesome consequences. The town, which this year surveyed as the most depressing place to live in the UK, had a high murder rate which went hand in hand with high unemployment. But besides the gang shit, almost worse was the constant threat of

getting your head kicked in by gangs of bored youths. Walking anywhere on your own was always a risk, day or night. One of the most fucked up things I remember was my mate's dog finding a decapitated head in a bush. It belonged to some old guy who had been murdered by his daughter. There are so many stories like this that you just kinda become blasé about it. It was a pretty fucked up place. I don't know if many places like that exist in Sweden. There's certainly nowhere like it in Stockholm.

MRR: You guys have been involved in the punk scene for years now, what do you think has changed? For better, for worse?

Viktor: If there's anything that I think has gotten worse it's the lack of good gig spaces in Stockholm. On the positive side there has been a lot of great punk shows in Stockholm this last few years, with both Swedish and international bands, thanks to organizers like Dead Rhythm, Clueless Punks and Punx 44.

Lucas: The main difference I see is the amount of effort you need to put into things to make them happen. From promoting a gig, to recording, finding members and releasing stuff. Everything is easier. I guess it brings a few more people that are interested but not as dedicated. That's not necessarily a problem. I think it's more diverse now too. Way more women and trans people playing in bands...

MRR: There have been a lot of reunions recently, with a lot of Swedish bands like Asocial, Mob 47, and DS-13 playing again. Has that affected the scene?

Lucas: Personally I'm not at all interested in reunions. It's not like we don't have plenty of new shit to look forward

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to. You see a lot of people at gigs when these bands play and it does not at all represent how the other gigs are like. I don't mind though. Some gigs are packed. Some gigs are not. It doesn't change what I do.

MRR: How do you feel the Swedish scene is doing right now?
Lucas: I have only been in Sweden for seven years but I dare to say it hasn't been this good since I moved here. There is a lot of good stuff around. My two favourite at the moment, especially live, are Strul from Gothenburg and Axe Rash from Stockholm.
Viktor: Also this new band from Malmö, Profoss is coming soon, and they're gonna be great!

MRR: Gareth, you have your blog *Punk Rock and Coffee*, where you write about gigs, old and new, as well as some other things. I think it's a fantastic read! How come you started writing that and what kind of response have you received?
Gareth: Wow, thanks a lot! Well, I've been writing since I was a kid at school and in the past I've kept tour diaries that I haven't really shared with anyone. But then when I discovered the whole blog universe I found that I really liked the format and I thought that I had a lot of tour stories to share. It started off being based on a lot of old crazy shit that can only happen on tour and that you have to be there to believe it, but kind of morphed into writing about everyday life on tour, and sometimes off. Even the mundane shit I find is interesting. And I kind of wanted to write it where it would be interesting even for people who aren't into punk.

That being said I write it purely for myself, and if anyone else enjoys it then that's great. But it's turned out that a quite lot of people have been into it and I've met people all over the place when out playing who have expressed how much they like reading it. One guy in Finland came up to me once and said that although he'd never met me he felt like he knew me since he'd read every single post on my blog. It's really humbling. And it's amazing connecting with people on a personal level through punk rock and writing about it.

MRR: How has the response been to your releases so far?
Gareth: It seems that some people don't get us at all, I guess we're kind of a difficult band to figure out? We're not to everyone's taste I guess. But then there are people who seem to really dig the band, we've had some really nice correspondence people in England, Japan, the US and other places, which is really cool! I think though that the LP is a little more diverse than our earlier releases and that it might open the band up to a few more people.
Lucas: It's been good so far. We got to tour and play different places and that's great. An interesting aspect is that a lot of people either like the two first 7" we did or the tapes and the LP. I guess our sound must have changed a lot.

MRR: What's the strangest gig you've played?
Lucas: It has to be a Nottingham (UK) gig a couple of years ago. A guy was kicked to death just around the corner from the venue, right before the first band was about to start and all the punks were out on the street drinking, bearing witness to it. A useless bar fight that went too far. I suppose that's not weird but it was bad vibes...
Gareth: That's Nottingham for you...

MRR: What was the situation with the man who got kicked to death?
Lucas: It's something everyone remembers and talks about whenever we go back to Nottingham to play.
Gareth: We were playing this practice space in Nottingham and all the punks were hanging outside in the street. About thirty meters away, outside a pub on the corner of the road, some guy just starts kicking the fuck out of someone. This was literally just before the first band of the night was about to start playing. By the time we went down there to find our what was happening paramedics were putting the poor guy into a bodybag and the other guy was being put in a cop car. Kev and some other friends were pretty shook up about it. Unfortunately, it's not all that unusual an occurrence in Nottingham.

MRR: Are there any reasons that would stop you from playing a show?
Lucas: We said no to headlining a festival in Copenhagen once because the promoter couldn't close the deal if we didn't play longer than 20 minutes.
Gareth: Haha yeah! They offered us a lot of money for the show! When I wrote and warned them that we only played for an absolute maximum of 20 minutes they got back to me and said that for the money they were offering they'd need us to play at least 20 minutes. I wrote back and said that I understood and asked them how much they *could* pay us for 20 minutes. They just laughed at that. We couldn't do it in the end anyway since Luc's visa renewal got delayed and he couldn't leave the country...

MRR: How important is the internet for you as a band, and as individuals?
BK: Very to me. I've obviously been around a lot before if existed but I find it a usual tool, especially for gig booking etc.
Viktor: It's pretty difficult to get by without out it today. Much of the scene is built up around different channels via the internet, so we rely on it ourselves to reach out to to people easier.
Gareth: As said, it's nice that it makes things easier when it comes to talking with people. It was a lot harder booking tours before it came into our lives. And then there is access to loads of great bands too. Personally I see both positive and negative aspects with it. You have a constant flow of information and opinions, which can make you pretty depressed at times.
Lucas: Well I guess it's part of everything we do nowadays. From sharing riffs with each other to promoting shows and getting people to listen to your music. Personally it takes too much time of my life. I could have a third band if it wasn't for Internet.

MRR: Do you remember the first time you used the internet?
BK: Errmm...trying to use it for an essay I was writing at Uni. I didn't have a clue how to use it.
Gareth: Oh yeah! I remember my dad had a huge computer that got hooked up to the net. Must have been 96 or something. I remember the amazement of suddenly having the world's biggest record shop in my dad's house! Until then all we had was a crappy record shop where if you ordered stuff it would take about a month to arrive. I landed in debt pretty much as soon as I started buying records online.

MRR: What are DB's future plans?
Viktor: Play more, hopefully continue to get the LP out in more countries and soon enough start writing new stuff for a new 7".
Gareth: To play as much as our packed schedules will allow and keep on keeping on.
Lucas: Play, record, and hang out.
BK: More records / gigs and touring Japan I hope.

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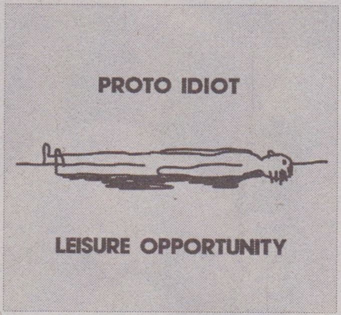
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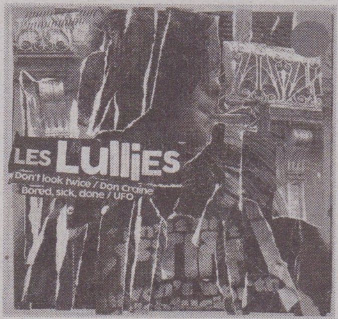
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COMPOSITE

One of my first shows of 2017 was on Martin Luther King Jr. day, four days before Donald Trump's inauguration. Composite's lead singer, Sami, had printed copies of King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and made them available for the [mostly white] crowd. I knew then that, thanks to both their music and their willingness to combine personal, political, and live music, Composite would be a band worth following.

Composite's discography is not yet robust but it is a fine example of quality over quantity. I recently sat down with the band to discuss their origins, the intersections of community and politics, and even got a brief botany and art history lesson. Composite earns their name as inspiration and knowledge among the members is diverse and far-reaching.

Introduction and interview by Nicole Everto. Photos by Farrah Skeiky and Nicole Everto.

MRR: I noticed that for your first EP, Jordan's not listed.
Sami: Jordan's very new to the band—she just joined the band late last year. We originally wrote the EP with our old bassist and then he left the band and we were looking the right person to fill his slot. Jordan came along and I knew she could play bass and I knew she could sing and I know she's rad so it ended up being a great fit.

MRR: Sami, I know you're from the east coast. Are you [Heather and Jasmine] from California?
Jasmine: We're both from California. I'm from southern California, I moved to the Bay Area in 2007.
Heather: And I've never left the Bay Area. I've lived in Oakland since 2004.

MRR: So how did you all connect?
Jasmine: I already knew Heather because I'd booked a show for her band, Saint Lorena, but I'd also known who she was because she's really cool and does lots of rad stuff—
Heather: —and we were neighbors.
Jasmine: And we were neighbors! But we didn't really know each other. It wasn't until...
Sami: Ray Martinez—he used to live here and be a coordinator for *MRR*—he had this band, Autonomy, in Chicago and when he moved here.
Sami: We can summarize the band's history. *Reader's Digest*. So, Ray started Autonomy with Heather and Jasmine.
Heather: It had been Ray's project that he'd played with, with various other members, for years and years.
Sami: Yeah, at the same time, Jasmine texted me like, "I'm in this band, we need a singer, you should come check it out." It ended up working. We wrote some songs. Once we were at the point of being show ready, ready to record a demo, Ray announced he was moving back to

Chicago. But the three of us were already like, "we're fucking pumped on these songs we wrote together," so we decided that we wanted to continue and ended up releasing the demo as Composite.

MRR: So, Jasmine contacted Sami about singing. How did you meet each other?

Jasmine: Yeah, we have mutual friends and through shows and *MRR*.

Sami: Yeah, I'd always see Jasmine around and she's wonderful so I was really excited when she hit me up to be in a band, she's so cool!

MRR: So, Ray's gone and you're looking for a new bassist. Did you audition other people before Jordan?

Sami: We had another bassist for about a year. We wrote the EP with him and did a couple of tours. I knew Jordan because we worked at Fat Wreck Chords together.

Heather: I had played in Autonomy, I filled in for one of their tours. So when Ray moved out here, he wanted to restart the band in California. So, that's how I got involved.

MRR: I heard this song, that all three of you recorded, it's by Know Secrets.

Sami: Ohh! Oh, yeah!

MRR: It's really good but it also sounds so different from Composite. How was it doing that song? Did it fuck with your head making such a different thing together? Did it change how you approach Composite at all?

Jasmine: Not really! That songwriting process wasn't very different, just faster! Know Secrets is our mutual friend Eric who I was previously in a band with. It was his music project where he really wanted to involve his friends and community in co-writing the songs. Anywho, much like Composite, we'd just build off of a riff. It was just really fast because any little riff I had he immediately had something to build off of it. Although the writing process is similar, our different styles meshing take the music in a different direction.

Heather: I've always played in multiple bands that had different styles. That's really helpful to achieve balance and to kind of have...all of your goals that you want to reach through playing music met through different projects. You might have a pop punk band that's really fast and high energy and fun and you might have another band that's really serious and thoughtful. So you get the best of all those worlds. It doesn't feel like a conflict to me,to play wildly divergent styles.

MRR: Totally! I think what was interesting to me was that all three of you did this thing together.

Sami: It ended up being cool. I think it was little bit accidental. I knew he wanted to write a song with Jasmine and Heather because he knows that they're talented musicians and likes what they do. When he was going through vocals for that record, I actually ended up singing on three or four tracks. That was the one that I ended up singing the most on. It was kinda cool because it was the first time I'd written a vocal thing with someone else's vocal project. But then it ended up feeling special because it was mostly a Composite song but with this completely different sound. It was a neat experience to hear that played back and hear these elements of playing which were really familiar but also done in such a different way.

Heather: I think the weirdest thing about the process was seeing them perform it live with different people.

MRR: I didn't realize that happened!

Heather: It was this song we'd written together and watching someone else play the part...I improvise a lot when I'm playing so it was really wild to see someone copy what had been captured on the recording.

Jordan: That one improvisation you did is *art* now!

MRR: On your sound! I appreciate it because I think it's not a genre we are seeing much in Oakland these days. Ötzi is kinda similar—a darkwave-y, bass-y, dark punk kind of sound. Do you feel like you are different?

Jasmine: There's some really rad, dark punk, bands in Oakland that I really enjoy like Crimson Scarlet and Silent Era. I don't know that I personally feel very different, especially since I fell into the post-punk

guitarist with a reverb and chorus pedal trap. Whoops! *[laughter]*

Sami: I do think we take a different approach than a lot of bands do. One of the things I really like about playing in this band is that we all have a very unique way of playing whatever instrument we play and when we write songs we kind of intentionally try to listen back and see if it sounds too on point for a specific genre—if it does, we try to make it a little different. We work hard to keep things dynamic that way and try to push ourselves.

Heather: I think there's a lot of bands that I feel our music is akin to and it makes sense to play with but on an aesthetic level we don't sound like them. For example, one of my favorite Bay Area bands, Bitter Fruit...I don't think we sound anything like them but when we play shows together it's a lot of the same crew of people and the sounds make sense together even though they don't sound the same.

Jordan: I think we're all into the local scene enough that even though we don't sound like those bands, it makes sense for us to play with them.

Sami: Politics is something that strongly informs what we do. So a lot of times I think we end up playing with bands we feel politically aligned with. Not on an aesthetic basis but on the fact that this is also an opportunity for movement and for action. It's cool to be given a platform to really talk about things and stand alongside people that interpret that differently but have similar ideas.

MRR: That's a good point. That's something that excites me about Oakland. Do you think about politics when you write or are you thinking more micro?

Sami: I think about politics when I write lyrics, for sure. Sometimes it's a "personal is political" sorta thing but often, so much of my anxieties that I choose to unleash *[laughter]* through writing are based on my political outlook. All of us are outspoken, political, people.

Heather: We've played a lot of shows that are benefits and in that context I think Sami especially has been in a position to say something on stage about an important thing that we all care about and is a bigger political issue. But then we also take those politics home really seriously. We've been asked to play shows at a particular place or with a particular band and a friend or someone we know will say "hey, I don't feel comfortable going there because someone in that band or at that house assaulted me and I don't want to be public about it." So we've quietly declined to participate and protect the confidentiality of the person who let us know. We don't want to benefit from or lend any credibility to something that we think is hurtful to the people we want to be supportive of.

Sami: And when it's OK, we've been explicit about it. Like making a public announcement that we're never going to play at Gilman or turning down a show with TSOL because the singer has called himself a "violent, grave-robbing rapist" and we're like "We sing about sexual assault! We're not going to play with a dude who says that shit, even if it's just for shock value."

Heather: The Gilman thing ended up being kind of scary.

Sami: Yeah, people were threatening us.

Heather: It was mostly online but people were threatening us and then we, incidentally, ended up not playing any shows for eight months after that happened because we were still looking for a bass player. But I was scared that, if we played a show, people would come and—

Sami: We got some messages from some scary dudes that were saying "hey, I see you're playing this show. See you there," that kind of thing.

Jordan: It's also a very strange thing to just target one band.

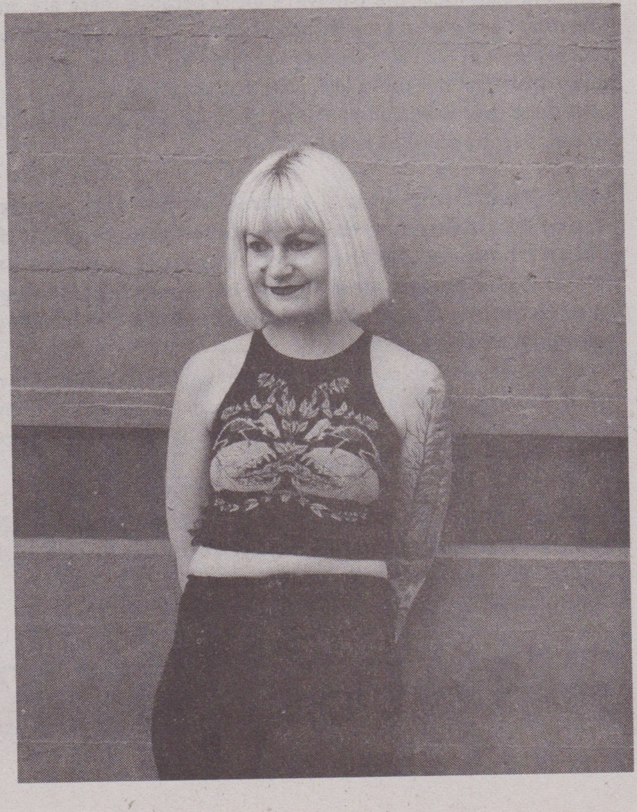
MRR: It's probably not just one! It's a legit fear. After Ghost Ship, the internet alt-right had entire campaigns around targeting DIY venues across country. Just sitting at home all day calling up places. That's what they do. They're obsessed with moving their "troll" behavior off the internet and into real life. It's terrifying.

Sami: Totally! And it's hard to judge how real the threat is.

Heather: And to be clear, this was before then and it was punks! It wasn't even like Proud Boys.

MRR: Yeah, and, Proud Boys were founded by the founder of Vice. They have close ties to punk communities. Which is what makes them terrifying.

Heather: There's a lot of crossover and I think that's been something



that...as I get older I'm thinking "did punk always suck this bad?" Like, did I just not see it because I wanted to be part of it so bad? Or, has it really gotten worse?

MRR: I think it's always been that way. I watched *Decline of Western Civilization* again last summer and I mean... being a brown person I tend to either pay close attention to racism or I just delete it. I totally forgot just how much racism is in that movie. There's one kid who just spews ageist and racist stuff and my boyfriend was caught off guard. I'd totally forgotten about it all. But that's a thing, people in '80s L.A. punk...pretty racist. Darby Crash!

Heather: Is that the first one? I haven't seen it! I've seen the third one and I met those kids—

MRR: Which is the third? The kids in the squats?

Heather: Yeah, and those kids were fucked up because they were manipulative and intense but they weren't into being bigoted, they were into stealing stuff.

MRR: There are worse things than stealing stuff!

Sami: They're into being scoundrels.

Jasmine: I haven't seen the first Decline since high school and I loved it then. I wonder if I watched it now if I'd be like "oof."

MRR: I still love it! I mean Alice Bag is in it. Overall it's still great but I just totally erased all the bad shit and held that movie as idol status.

Sami: Everything is so fucked and problematic in so many ways that sometimes, to protect ourselves and just enjoy life, you end up putting blinders on for certain things. One thing I really appreciate about this band and the dynamic we have now is that I feel like we're all really committed to supporting each other in not having to put blinders on and instead just confront whatever it is we need or want to confront. It's what motivates me to keep playing music in this group.

Heather: And I think part of the idea of looking back and being like "oh crap, all this fucked up shit is going on was it like that when I was younger and I just didn't notice," I think kind of our project of being here and playing...In the Bay we're lucky because there are so many sub-scenes and many of them are supportive of each other. We support each other and we try to support our friends. We try not to be anti-things-that-suck but more like, fuck that noise we're going to do this cool thing over here and you're all invited. If you're a fucking douche you're going to be asked to leave.

MRR: That's important! I think people exaggerate this rise of PC culture and call it whatever you want but if that doesn't happen...All these little rats just start coming in. It's one and then suddenly you have a Proud Boys group in your house and it's like "sweet, glad I didn't stop the problem at the start!"

Jordan: People want to say that people are being a PC crybaby, snowflake, etc. If wanting to be a good person means I'm a snowflake then I will wear that title proudly if that means I'm not going to participate in someone else being a shitty person.

MRR: I think we've finally learned that ignoring things does not make them go away. It doesn't stifle those voices. It doesn't work.

Sami: It just allows them to rise unchallenged.

MRR: They just grow in private and then everyone wonders where it came from.

Heather: It's interesting, going back to macro vs. micro political theme because unfortunately, we're all way too familiar with the feeling of being gaslit. And that is gaslighting, when you speak up about something and you're told you're being a crybaby or too sensitive. It's invalidating your feelings, your experiences, and your contribution. It's gaslighting on a massive scale and it's fucked. We can recognize it on the bigger scale because we've recognized it on a smaller scale in personal relationships. From parents to teachers to bosses to coworkers to partners and / or friends. We're used to being told that our feelings are not legitimate or invalid.

Sami: That we're hysterical. That makes this a neat project because we get to challenge that in ourselves, to get "hysterical" and have it be fun. Or at least cathartic!

Jordan: After being told my entire life that I'm too sensitive, coming here is like going to church. I like coming to a place and talking about these things that affect me and other people in a serious way and having it be understood.

MRR: You mentioned earlier that there's a situation where it's revealed that a venue, house, or person is not acceptable. And you respond directly to the person and support them. Do you think the information percolates out?

Jordan: A lot of things find their way out when people know each other and the community is big but it's also fairly small in terms of people talking to one another. I don't go out of my way to disclose that information unless I feel like someone is going to get hurt—

Sami: Or if someone is asking for it to get out there. That's the big thing.

Jordan: I never want to disclose something without a person's permission if it affects them directly.

Heather: I had a conversation with someone about this yesterday where they had a bad experience with someone and they didn't want to make

a big, public, deal about it but they were worried that this person being around was dangerous to other people. Even in our bubble, people who speak out against other people who have social capital frequently get punished for it. People don't always want to be exposed to that punishment or danger. It's a tough choice. We all agree that we tend to go with whatever decision that the person who was hurt feels comfortable with but it's a really tough question because it's a balance of protecting other people but you don't want to expose yourself or the person who was already hurt to future or further injury. There's probably tons of stuff we don't even know about.

MRR: One reason I ask is because I came from Olympia / Seattle which can feel like a land of accountability processes. Olympia is such a large community in such a small space, everyone knows everything in about two minutes and there are meetings called for everything. It's like living in rural Kentucky but with a bunch of punks. I've never lived in a place as geographically large as the Bay Area with such a tight-knit community spread around the region. It's really weird to see how those dynamics shift. It seems harder to manage things like this.

Sami: It is. Sometimes either you get blindsided with something or you end up playing at a place or with someone and you—

Jordan: You find out later that they suck.

Sami: Yeah! Or that they're dangerous. I've definitely had encounters where I found out later that the person was actually dangerous and I had to distance myself.

MRR: And then you have to do it slowly.

Sami: Exactly.

Heather: We have the internet now! I think there's a lot of interaction among people who don't actually know each other in real life, like through Facebook groups.

MRR: That's the other thing. I moved from the east coast when the internet was still on the rise for younger people in subcultures and from there I moved to Olympia where the internet was completely unused in the community despite becoming more popular in general. Olympia opted out. So moving here and seeing that people who are into punk use the internet for that community is weird.

Heather: And it has been a little more underground since the fire, with DIY spaces getting shut down people are getting scared—

Sami: Or evicted.

Heather: There's a little more security around information and people are using those channels but less publicly. Some events are using addresses, you have to "ask a punk" which is a pretty reliable thing.

MRR: One of my first shows in Oakland was my friend's band coming through on tour and I didn't know anyone but I wanted to see them. They didn't know the address before they got here and I was like "I don't know any punks! I just want to see my friends play!"

Jordan: Tell me where to find a punk to ask!

Heather: I like the idea that in theory you could ask a punk you don't know! I did that once a few years ago on tour. We had a show in Asheville, North Carolina, and we didn't know where it was. We got off the freeway and figured we'd find downtown / central Asheville. As we were getting off we saw some punks walking so we rolled down the window and were just like "hey! where's the punk show?" and they gave us great directions.

Jordan: I want that to happen in the Bay Area but the likelihood of that happening is less and less, unfortunately.

Heather: If you know what neighborhood it's in you can probably find it just by looking but you also might find a different show.

MRR: How was the recording process for your EP, *Artemisia*? Are the songs mostly ones you've been practicing or were they new songs?

Jasmine: After the demo we found our second bassist pretty quickly and wrote a bunch of songs with him. One song from the demo was re-recorded for the EP. Right around the time we were ready to record was when we split ways with him. It just came out and I'm really excited!

Sami: It has been a long time in the making so it feels good to like...birth it. Just think of the sleeve as the placenta.

MRR: Are you going to eat the placenta? You're supposed to do that.

Sami: I'll never tell.

MRR: The first song is really good and the art looks great. Did one of you make it?

Jasmine: Heather did the artwork.

Heather: The concept was collaborative!

Jordan: We spent a day in the library looking for cool photos of statues.

Sami: Looking through the art books.

Heather: We had a band day at the library in downtown Berkeley. There's a whole floor of art books and it's magical.

MRR: Was there a theme you were looking for or did you kind of grab the books that were compelling?

Sami: We had a rough idea of the general aesthetic we were going for and elements we wanted to incorporate. I was dead set on calling the EP *Artemisia* and because it's Greek we kind of ended up going in the direction of looking at statues of Greek goddesses and stuff like that. I think the statue on the cover is a rendition of Aphrodite.

Heather: Who it turns out was the consort of all other Gods.

Sami: She's the goddess of love! She's got a lot to give.

Jasmine: We were looking for statues but also different botanicals and we knew we wanted some moon textures in there.

Sami: Yeah, and Artemisia happens to be my favorite genus of plants. It is home to a lot of witchy plants like mugwort and wormwood, and it's named after the female botanist that is credited as being the first to identify them. As a female ecologist I think it's cool that some of my favorite plants were named after a female botanist. It's also the name of an Italian painter from the 16th century, who was raped by her mentor. It was rare for women to be apprentices to painters at the time. She took him to court, which is radical for back in the day and she lost because of the patriarchy. But what is probably her most famous painting is a rendition of Judith slaying Holofernes but the way that she did it was her and another woman slitting the throat of her rapist.

MRR: I know that picture. The guy lying down..

Sami: Yeah! And that appeals to my art history nerdiness and female empowerment and witchy things and botany. It encompassed all of these things that I was thinking a lot about when I was writing the record so I felt strongly about incorporating that into the name.

Jordan: Now I know what I'm getting you for Christmas. I've seen a massive back patch of that painting and it's incredible.

MRR: How are you feeling about Artemisia six months in? How has the reception been?

Sami: I've been pleasantly surprised at how well the record has been received. We've gotten a lot of really lovely feedback that people like it, sold a fair amount for the first six months, and folks that came to our shows seemed genuinely stoked on it. That feels nice. That said, a lot of these songs were written at least two years ago (if not more!), so I think we're all champing at the bit to get new material under our belt and to keep progressing our sound and songwriting. I feel like we've all improved as musicians and our process as a band is more comfortable, and our new material is definitely reflective of that.

MRR: You recently went on tour. How was your first east coast tour after the release?

Heather: Yeah, we did a short Northwest tour and then a Northeast and East Coast tour in November. Thanks everyone who helped us out and made it so amazing!

Sami: It was great! It is very hard to predict how a first tour anywhere is going to go, since not many people know who we are outside of the Bay Area. But we ended up getting booked with super solid bands, and not a single show was a dud. Folks were incredibly gracious and hospitable and seemed genuinely stoked on what we're doing. It was a really positive experience! It's a great feeling to leave home and realize how many amazing people live all over the place, making art and building community. It was humbling to be able to meet so many people and to be received so kindly. It felt particularly important to feel that now, considering how divided people are over political lines and how generally fucked things feel in the world at large.

MRR: What's up next? More touring, writing more?

Heather: Moving forward, we're working on a full length; we have a lot of stuff in the works. But as Bay Area living goes, it's a struggle to put as much time as we want into the creative projects that keep us going.

MRR: I appreciate you letting me take some of your time!

Heather: We always spend the first hour of band practice talking.

Sami: We hold congress.

Heather: We really like each other and we don't get to see each other much so it's hard to use our only hang out time to do just one thing.

Sami: We have future goals. I think we'd all like to tour Europe at some point. I'd love to go to Australia but that's going to be...we've gotta get an LP done first. I wanna write, I wanna tour, but sometimes you gotta take breaks.

Heather: I wanna throw this out there. We played a show where, for the first time in 15 years of playing music, there were no men in any of the bands on the entire bill. It was really fucking cool.

Sami: It was also a pop-punk show. We played with bands we wouldn't normally think about playing with just because we're such different genres. The crowd was such that I wasn't... there were people I'd seen at Fat Wreck Chords shows... but I wasn't sure how they'd receive a weirdo, goth, punk band. And it was so rad! It was the most...we got such a kind and awesome and kinda overwhelming response from people. It was really fun and rad to be surrounded by a bill of women, there a bunch of dudes there to support the bill. Everyone was really respectful and stoked on all of these bands.

Heather: Even though all of the bands came from a wide variety of genres and mostly not what I'm normally into, everyone ripped super hard. Everybody was so fucking talented.

Sami: And we didn't know many people at the show which was a very different experience for us, for a local show.

Heather: I didn't know a single person! It was refreshing and cool.

MRR: Like being on tour but at home.

Sami: Yeah! I'd like to do more of that. it felt really nice to step outside of our typical comfort zone, be well-received, and have a great time.

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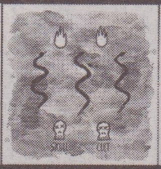

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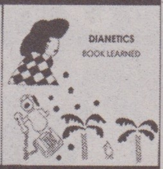
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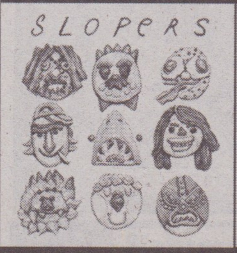

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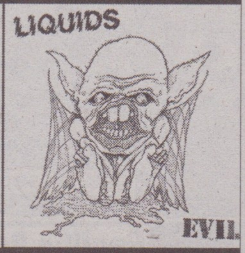
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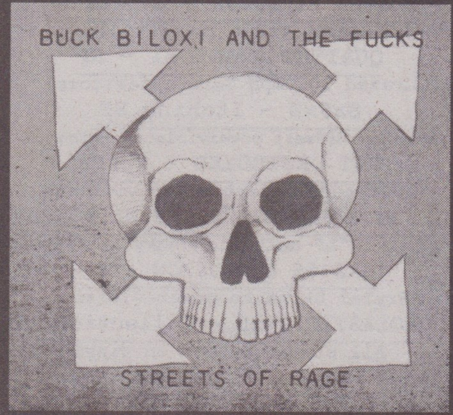
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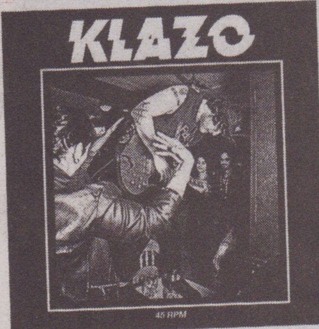
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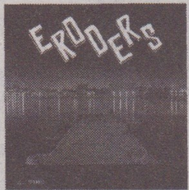

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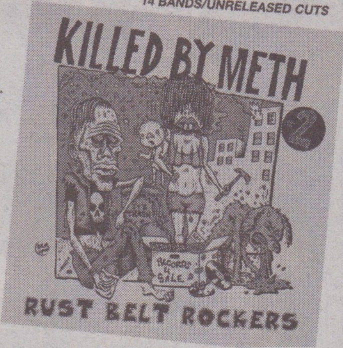
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OXIDANT

To many, both within and without the punk community, powerviolence is a noisy maelstrom, an unlistenable cacophonous din. But many others will find precisely those elements to be powerviolence's greatest strengths. One would potentially expect members of a powerviolence band to be as disarmingly aggressive as the music itself, but Raleigh, North Carolina's Oxidant stands in firm opposition to this idea. The three men and one nonbinary person in Oxidant defy these expectations with their calm, thoughtful, and sweet demeanors. And then the music begins...a roar of propulsive energy, a seismic shockwave, a cataclismic nightmare...and within less than a minute, a pause before the band charges another assault. It is hard to believe that these sonic volleys come from the same calm people! We speak to Oxidant not long after the release of their Deconstruct EP *(available through Oxidant bassist Will Butler's To Live A Lie Records).*

Interview by Daniel Lupton of Sorry State Records.
Photos by Brett Bays and David Schwentker.

MRR: Do y'all want to tell me the origin story? How did the band start? What order did people come into the fold?
Mike Gifford: I had heard of the To The Front Music Alliance *[a Raleigh-based organization that aims to enable artistic collaboration between all sorts of people]* because I'm a relatively recent transplant to Raleigh. I was new to town, shy, and wanted to do something new. I went to the first meeting and wound up meeting a person named Will who had similar interests as me. We did some jamming. At the second meeting I met Will Saenz and another guy and it kind of started from there. Then we had a few people shuffled around and Will Butler wound up in the fold, and then KJ. There are a lot of details missing, but that is the basic structure. That is when things really meshed into something cohesive. Before that it was Will S. and me writing songs. We practiced those songs diligently and we stuck with it regardless of what else was happening.
Will Saenz: There were plenty of practices with just you and me.

MRR: I think a lot of people think of Will Butler as the powerviolence guy. Was that something that was baked in before he joined? Or did that change the dynamic?
Mike: No. The other Will I met at the first meeting said he wanted to start a powerviolence band. I come from that background so I immediately started talking to him. That was sort of the foundational element that this was built off of.
Will S.: It's funny, this whole band is a product of TTFMA
KJ: I've known Elizabeth (from No Love and Crete, who helped start To The Front Music Alliance) for a while and I moved here from Tampa in November. She found out I was moving here and invited me. I went to band practice just to hang out because I had just moved to Raleigh. Someone didn't show up to do vocals and I was like, "I have been in a few bands, I can be loud."
Will S.: I think that is another common thread right there, because besides Will Butler of course, we are all transplants to the area...I'm from Greensboro by way of Philadelphia.
KJ: And Mike's from Buffalo.
Will S.: To The Front Music Alliance was a nice way for relatively shy people to come together.

MRR: That kind of leads to another question I want to ask; what is everybody's impression of Raleigh? How does it seem different than other places or other scenes?
KJ: Coming from Tampa, as soon as I got here I felt welcomed with open arms. "Oh shit you're new here, that's cool, what do you do?" But if you're new to Tampa, no one gives a fuck about you.
Michael: I was also a little hesitant because I am quite a bit older than other people. At the first To The Front meeting I was easily twenty years older than anyone else. I'm 46 years old. There are not a lot of people my age who do this kind of thing. But I'm not into the kind of thing my quote unquote "peers" are into. I've always found my way into social interactions through music. I'm not into sports, or cars, or hunting.
KJ: I love all of those things.
Will S.: Michael, why do you hate freedom?
KJ: It's America, come on.
Will S.: I guess the phrase that comes to mind about Raleigh is small but passionate. I'm lucky enough to have a foot in punk and a foot in metal. While, quantity-wise, it's not a whole lot of people, everybody is doing something, whether it's taking pictures or being in bands. It's very concentrated, which I appreciate.
KJ: And diverse. People are playing different types of music. Like Will is also in Suppressive Fire and us, and then there's No Love, all of which sound different. We all support each other.
Will S.: It's fun to see other bands who might not have that many things in common with us in terms of music doing shows with us at the Bunker *[the current Raleigh show house, where Will S. lives]*. I saw that Essex Muro had a little shout-out to the Bunker on their tape and I was like, "Awww!"

MRR: The Bunker is definitely the best thing to happen to Raleigh in a long time.
Will Butler: I've been in town for fifteen years, so I've seen a lot of ebbs and flows. Different genres climb up and fall out of vogue and I know that when it all comes down to it, a lot of it depends on what you put into it. There are definitely the times when there's not a single house doing shows and there aren't any bands to fill out shows so bands don't even come through. Your label *[Sorry State]* has actually helped a whole lot. My label *[To Live A Lie]* has helped certain bands come through and I think that has been important. But also just the willingness to book the shows. Right now having the Bunker is a huge resource to have bands that won't get venue shows to come through. Raleigh is on the upswing and hopefully nothing happens between our labels, this house, our band or any of that stuff to start a downswing, but I'm really enjoying where we are now.

MRR: I've been here for just about that same amount of time, and there have been several eras that were defined by a chief curator. There were the Ira years. He put his stamp on the scene for a little while and the scene was defined by his tastes. Now it seems like everyone booking at the Bunker helps to shape the way we see ourselves.
KJ: Having a house to have shows at is really important in any scene. Those are always the best shows. They are always all-ages, you're not spending $6 on a drink, or if you don't want to drink you're not in a bar environment. So any scene that has a house to go to for shows is really fucking important. Even living in Tampa, any time there are three or four houses having shows, the scene is fucking bumping.

MRR: It seems like people develop more intimate connections in that kind of environment. Every time I go to the Bunker I have at least one really good conversation, usually more, and I don't think you can say the same thing about a bar. People are at house shows to chill and become friends.
KJ: You can be like "oh cool you like this band" or "you're here to see this? Me too. What's your name?" Instead of being like I'm at this fucking bar.
Will S.: Bar culture in itself can be pretty alienating.
KJ: Thumbs down on bar culture.
Will B.: The other great thing about Raleigh is that it's not so big that it's divided. Like you were saying you have to play shows with bands from other genres. You can't just form your clique and say that you hate all the people who are into other genres.
KJ: Everyone goes to everything for the most part. We played a show with the Muslims, who are totally outside the powerviolence genre, but they were so tight. I like the diversity of Raleigh.
Will B: Also Sarah, who booked that show, she's doing a series of curated shows where the money goes to charity. The money from the Muslims show went to a local animal sanctuary. I love stuff like that. I think that's important to keep the scene alive.

MRR: So I'm wondering which of your songs took the longest to come together and why?
KJ: For me it was definitely "Guillotine" and "Jail Lord." Will S. and I had to sit down and be like "this is your lyric phrasing, this is the spacing, etc." The couple of bands I was in before, I would just

yell like a maniac and this is like "oh, there is actual structure." So when I first joined the band, "Guillotine" and "Jail Lord" were my least favorite songs, and now they are my favorite. "Jail Lord" is my favorite song that we do. That took a lot of work for me personally, I was just like oh my god I have to pay attention to things."

Will S.: It doesn't help that every other song that we do is quite intentionally a blast of powerviolence, quick lyrics, and it's done in thirty seconds. Whereas those two, and we kind of paired them up during our set because for whatever reason, they have a lot of structure to them, they are three times longer than any other song.

Will S.: I remember seeing Troy from Essex Muro going hard to that song so I was like "hey, that's a keeper."

Michael: From a musical perspective, I think Will S. and I work well together on songwriting. He writes things that click with me. I've definitely been in situations where it's very difficult for me to pick up on what someone else writes. It just isn't organic and it does not feel natural. For me it's a very important to play with a natural feel. Once we get things locked in, it goes really well. There are times in our recent shows where we are so on; it's a really special feeling. I don't want to say it's a machine because that makes it sound inhuman, but you're hitting all the right accents together and everything is just...

MRR: It's a really good feeling, like a flow state.

KJ: All of our personalities blend together very well as a band. We joke very often about how we are the most awkward band and how I might be the most sociable one, because I'm like *whisky whisky* cool I'll talk to everyone now. We are all really fucking awkward and we are really considerate of each other's feelings.

MRR: I would identify as a shy person too, and I think that can come off as cold but in reality it's the opposite...I feel hyper-aware of everybody's perspective and super empathetic, and it sounds like that is part of the way your band operates. It sounds like you are very collaborative and very aware of where everyone is coming from.

KJ: Definitely. We all kind of look after each other and check in. I have terrible anxiety and I know the three of them check in before we play shows. I'm *fiiiiiiiiine*.

Will S.: I think we also contribute fairly unique things to the band. Michael and I contribute mainly to the songwriting. Will B. does a thousand things amazingly well. I remember at his second practice he was like "what do you think of this logo?" and I was just like "well you just made a logo so it's already perfect in my book." And then KJ, they weren't here originally when most of our songs were written but the last two or three songs now, they and I have sat down and wrote together and we've also realized that that clicked really well.

KJ: My favorite song we've done so far is about an incident that happened in May when we played in Greensboro and some fucking bro...I try to make an effort to say women and queer people should be up front, and this dude was drunk and he was maybe offended, but he threw me to the ground and kicked me in the ribs a couple of times and my knee got fucked up.

MRR: While you were playing?

KJ: No, when this other band was playing. It sucked and I couldn't walk. Then we sat down and I was like I'm really pissed about this, this is awful, and we wrote this song. It's like "bros get the fuck out" basically; fuck off with your macho bullshit. The lyrics are like "*grow the fuck up / get the fuck out / punk fuck boys / sucks to suck.*"

SONOR
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MRR: That kind of makes me think of another question. In regard to lyrics, how important is it to communicate to the audience versus express something inside of you? Is that a balance you've ever thought about?

KJ: One of the songs, "Joey," is about my best friend who passed away. I always try to make a point when we play that song to let people know that it is important to look out for your friends. The mental health state of people is generally shit. We live in a shitty ass society. Donald Trump is our fucking president; how the fuck did that happen? Things are shitty but it's also really important to check in with people we care about. When we were recording that song, they had just passed away and I was having a really hard time because I couldn't go back to Tallahassee where they lived. So I always make a point with that song in particular to be like: check in on your friends. Everyone's fucked but sometimes people are more fucked than you think. Then there's "Deconstruct." "Deconstruct" is about calling out your friends if they are being shitty. Callout culture can be really annoying when it's abused but it's also important to say, "hey, you're being a piece of shit, you're being misogynistic," and if they don't respond then fuck off, you're not welcome here, you're not welcome in this scene. Just get the fuck out.

Will S.: With "Deconstruct" a lot of it has to do with personal growth as well. When I was a kid, thirteen or fourteen, I'd hear about an incident and think, "oh I love this person's records so how could they possibly do that?" Then ten years later I was seeing this happening again. I can't contribute to this situation and make this cycle even worse. It's my declarative statement of trying to be a better person by realizing that loving someone's music shouldn't come into the equation.

MRR: I bring that up because it's clear that you put so much thought into the lyrics, but then you get on stage and it's just like "*Raaaaaaaah*." You're talking about a kind of powerlessness as you introduce the song and then after meditating on that for a moment you summon the power of hardcore and powerviolence on your behalf. It's a nice little moment.

Michael: That's a contradiction that I've dealt with for twenty-five years. You can't hear what the singer is saying so you have to read the lyric sheet. At the same time I would hope that the overall presentation, dare I say vibe, gets the idea across. I always want my bands to have intelligent lyrics. Hopefully the listener is tuned in enough to take in the totality of everything. If they are just the casual listener that just wants brutality then that's fine, but I would hope that at least a segment of the listeners will get the big picture and understand where we are coming from. That is important.

MRR: I think that comes across. When I think of Oxidant

I don't think of a dumb hardcore band. It's not what you're putting out into the world.
Will S.: That would be a great sticker on a CD. "Oxident is not a dumb band."

MRR: Some bands are into that. Dumb hardcore is a thing. Some people like swimming in their idiocy.
Will B.: This is the first band I've been in since I was sixteen that has lasted a year, so this is a different experience as an adult. But I think what you are talking about with catharsis...each one of us needs this band in our own ways. It reminds me of why I play pick-up soccer. Organized sports in general, people watch them, but on a smaller level it's more for the players' enjoyment. We all use the band as a positive thing; a creative output; a way to be social with each other and with other people who like similar music. Obviously through playing punk you can get the catharsis because it's been a shitty week, or shitty month, or shitty year. We get up on stage and we perform for other people but a lot of it is us living in our own heads, being awkward, and feeling better after playing.
KJ: Also on that note, being a person who is queer and non-binary, it's really important for me to say, yo, punk has catered to cis-white men for a long fucking time. I want more women and more queer people and more non-binary people up in the front to be like "this is for us too." We've come a long way and we've fought to get to where we are now. I've been going to punk shows since I was fifteen and it has always been a point for me when I see my lady friends, trans people, queer people, to be like "this is for you too, have fun." When people are in that spectrum want to be in the front and they feel like they can't be, I'm like "this is for you." I get really emotional about that because my whole existence in punk scenes has been dudes everywhere and seeing women and non-binary people in the back wanting to have fun but feeling intimidated. I'm like "no no no, this is your space too."

MRR: Do you think you'll ever do an LP? I think powerviolence has a complicated relationship with LPs. When I think of classics of the genres I think of 7"s. How would an LP look different than a 7"?
Michael: I think for this kind of music, a 7" is suited for multiple quick blasts. An LP gives you the chance to come up with a song that is a little longer and lets us play around with different things... as long as you pay attention to your craft and songwriting and try not to crank out a bunch of songs to fill it. If you're taking each song on its own, working hard on it and making it stand on its own, and then you're also diligent with sequencing so it flows well, then I think it's certainly a viable thing.
Will S.: This goes back to Michael and our mutual obsession with all things Hüsker Dü but we are really into where the songs should be positioned across the album. For instance with the song "Deconstruct," when I wrote the riff I thought, "that's the closer for the album." So we do that song last every set. Like Michael said I think powerviolence has a really bad rep for having albums with thirty songs where there's no rhyme or reason to it. We were able to have good structure on a 7" so if we're able to keep that formula for something larger then I don't think any of us are going to be opposed to that.
Michael: My vision is that we maybe do some splits to disseminate our stuff that way. But I think an LP is a nice project.
Will B.: You and me doing labels know that when bands start to hit, especially with me dealing with bands with shorter songs, you really want to push the bands that are doing great stuff to do the LP while they are writing their best material. For me having put out the EP, I feel like that is so new that I'm having trouble seeing into the future. I'm glad that everyone has a vision of the future because I'm still focused on getting the EP into people's hands. I think it's being received well, so I think the natural flow is to do some splits, and then eventually when we get there do the LP. We were originally supposed to record the EP two months before we did but we got snowed out of the recording session. In that time period we changed as a band; we got tighter and we got further into the songs, so I'm in no huge rush to write an LP. I feel like we'll be a different band by the time we hit the LP, if that is where we are going.

MRR: One thing that sticks out about Oxidant is that there is a ton of documentation. It seems like Will B. has made sure that lots of your sets are videotaped, etc. There is lots of data about Oxidant out there. Is that important to you?
Will B.: Not everyone can fit in that basement. There are people with disabilities who can't come out. There are a lot of reasons you can't be at a show: work obligations, physical location, social anxiety, etc. I grew up going to shows in Winston-Salem when I was sixteen and seventeen, and there is no proof of some of those shows, even the bigger ones. I saw all the people with camcorders. I think the whole mysterious guy hardcore thing is silly and funny and I guess it does add some intrigue but I'm not doing this band for publicity or to make someone buy this because they don't understand us. I think it's cool for someone to buy the record, or even not buy the record, and see the continuum that a band is on. I put as much stuff as I can on Archive.org. I try to keep track of any pictures, because ten years from now this band will still be important to me because my band seventeen years ago is still important to me. I have this rare chance of living in the moment and being able to collect it. I am more capable of keeping record of my own band than anyone else. It's still great to see us early on because it wasn't bad...there are no bad points, and even if there were then I'd let them exist online. I'm proud of where we were and where we have come from. Our first show was October 22nd and the day of this interview is October 1st, so we are hitting a year and I'm happy with everything.

MRR: It reminds me of what Michael was saying earlier about people understanding things from the whole package, not just the songs or the record. The way you describe it makes me think of how Crass records had all the inserts and they gave you so much information that you could get sucked into their world.
Will B.: I recently got a video camera to digitally convert a bunch of shows a friend had recorded, and I brought that into the studio. It's very personal. This video goes along with the EP on a disc or download card and gives my perspective of our recording.
Michael: The documentation to me is important. My academic training is as a historian, so I appreciate when anyone bothers to preserve things. Because when you're researching a thesis and you're dependent on these source materials...thank god someone bothered to do that. We are part of this culture of punk, so we are taking time to document things. This happened. If someone decides to write a book about 2017 hardcore in twenty years they'll have something to look at.

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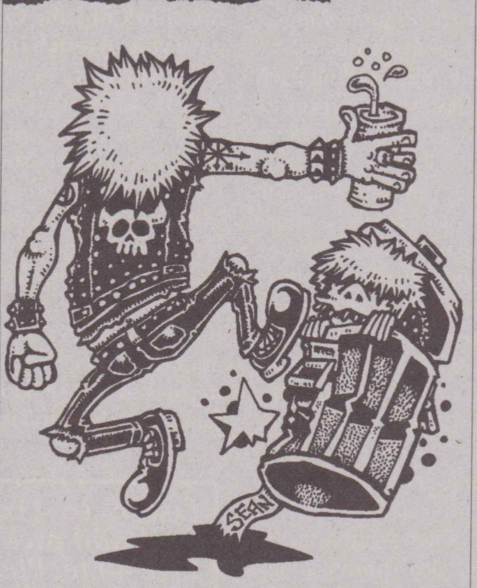

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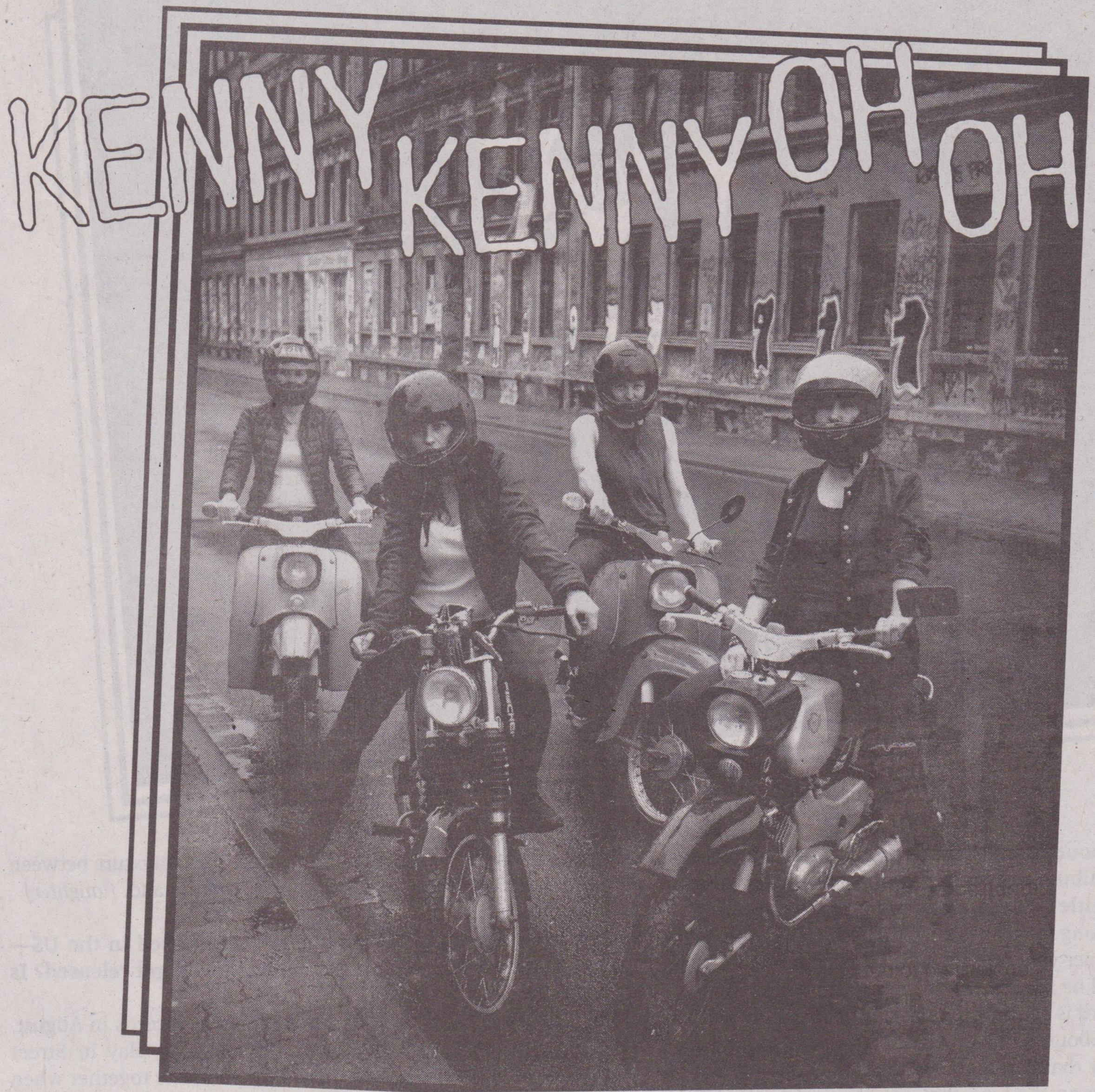

Interview by Manuela (Finisterre / Crevasse). Photos by Simon Brinkmann and Andreas Langfeld

Kenny Kenny Oh Oh is an all female punk band from Leipzig and Berlin, who play fast straight-forward punk rock music with catchy and recognizable melodies, sing along lyrics and a snotty but charming attitude—maybe that's why some might call it riot grrrl.

I remember exactly when I saw them for the first time many years ago. My booking collective and I booked a show for them in the autonomous center (AZ) in Köln. They were on tour with their friends band Levitations from Berlin and I was pretty surprised seeing two all-female bands touring Germany, while before that, we always thought it´s difficult to find bands in Germany where women and queers are the majority on stage…this evening was the beginning point of an inspiring and long lasting friendship!

Since they formed in 2009, they have put out three releases. After the first 7" EP in 2013 (Contraszt! Records, Emancypunx Records), they made a split 7" with their friends from Lambs (Köln) in 2014 (Contraszt! Records, Racoone Records). In June this year they finally released their first full length record with this straight-in-the-face album name: I Will Not Negotiate *(LP available in Europe through Contraszt! records and Abfall Records; tape released in US by Nervous Intent Records).*

Kenny Kenny Oh Oh are Olaf (bass), Kutte (vocals), Fritte (guitar) and Made (drums, vocals) who talk in this interview about their recent record, their ambivalence towards queer-feminist politix and punk, and in which parts punk is more than music, but also friendship.

MRR: Let´s talk about your recent record. It took quite some time to release an album, why is that? And is there any specific connection to the title of this record *I Will Not Negotiate*?

Fritte: It took us so long to make the record because we only make like two new songs per year and we already released six of them. Our next record will be released out of our retirement home.

The title of the record is actually the title of the first song we ever wrote. The song is about how women are pressured to have kids and get asked about that casually. The original version is not on the record—it's only on the tape that got released in the US on Nervous Intent Records—but we liked the fierce, stubborn tone of the title.

Kutte: Yes, I think it took us more than three years to write those songs. But well, you know how short three years can be! We played many shows, everyone had to work and there are always tons of other things to do. Beside that, we started the band from almost nothing, that means most of us didn't know how to play our instruments. So I believe we progressed a lot in the first years but with that we also became more ambitious. Every one of us had a time when she thought that she was just not capable to come up with something cool or was not able to play or sing things right. So some practice days could be filled with just trying to cheer that person up or looking together for an idea. So writing these songs was not always an easy process but all the more we are happy that we made it. Who would have thought that three years ago!? I didn't...

Fritte: This sounds a bit like a sad self-help group. It's not that bad. I think the main reason that it takes us so long is that it just takes me such a long time to come up with new guitar riffs, partly because I lack some guitar skills and partly because of laziness. People told me I should just steal riffs from other songs. This resulted in one of the songs on the record being a mixture between the Observers and Papa Roach. It's gotten out of hand. *[laughter]*

MRR: You mentioned a tape which got released in the US—tell us about it! Who is doing it, when does it get released? Is it just a special US Deal?

Olaf: The tape got released by Nervous Intent records in August. The label is run by Megan and John who also play in Street Eaters. We met them when we played some shows together when they were touring through Europe in 2014. We got on very well from the start and when we recorded our album in 2016 they immediately offered to release it.

MRR: Patient listeners will be pleased with a hidden track, what's that all about?

Fritte: My parents got me an ukulele for christmas and I had to use it for something. So I played one of our songs on it to the others. They didn't hate it so we decided to put it on the record because it's also the album title and we didn't wanna put the original version on it. Apparently as a ukulele song it is uncool so we had to hide it. Also we were kind of embarrassed by the lyrics so we asked our friend Kevin from La Vase to sing it. He's cool enough to pull shit like this off and he has the charming French accent this song deserves.

Kutte: Ha! That's not a hidden track! It's a ghost track! We had to learn the difference when the test pressing of our LP came. I was really wondering how often that happens to the pressing plant because almost everyone I asked (at least here in Germany) didn't know that what we had in mind is actually called ghost track.

MRR: In an older interview for the German *Underdog* fanzine

you mentioned that you are not a queer feminist project, but a punk band! Can you explain what you mean with that announcement?

Kutte: Yes, I remember that. It was referring to the fact that since we started playing live from time to time that people approach us primarily as women and not as musicians. It is always with good intentions but sometimes it turns out as the opposite. It can be a request such as "We need another female act...do you wanna play?" or an interview of a punk fanzine where every single question is about gender and feminism, or people who write about your band as a queer feminist project although you never stated anything like that yourself. I mean, queer feminism is important in our lives, we are confronted with topics around gender and feminism all the time in our everyday life, that's why we also have some songs about it and talk about it on stage. But we didn't start our band to be an example for anything, we wanted to make punk and to create and experience something together. So sometimes it feels as if being appropriated for other people's goals and not being seen as what we are or what we actually do.

Made: Maybe it is also important to say that here in Germany the punk scene is still very white and cis male. We grew up in that scene, went to shows, met our friends there and of course, had our conflicts with it. A queer feminist music scene exists next to this punk scene and there are not very many intersections between the two. Often I am convinced that this is the only way to do it and not get frustrated over and over again with trying to infiltrate the boys' fun club. But then we made really good friends on tour (for example in Köln or Hamburg) and saw that of course there are people who are also sick of having a scene which is so uniform, boring and not aware of its own constitution. I also have the impression that during the last couple of years more touring artists which advocate for topics such as diversity are getting established and are being appreciated by a very wide range of people.

Olaf: I think that it is also important to mention that as long as the punk and hardcore scene is still that dominated by cis and white men in Germany, as Kutte just said, there is still a high necessity for structures, events or concert groups that are explicitly feminist and whose aim is to empower and to support LGBTQI* people to start bands, experience their first shows on stages, to organize shows and workshops, and so on. There is still a lot of excluding mechanisms attitudes that are preventing especially LGBTQI* from being an active and visible part of the German punk and hardcore scene. Therefore safe spaces play an important role to encourage people to dare, to become involved and to empower each other.

MRR: Do you have an idea how to bring those both topics / scenes closer together? I mean in the US it seems, that there are way more intersections, maybe also the most queer and POC people involved in bands and stuff then I have experienced anywhere else. What do think is a reason for that compared to Europe, or at least Germany?

Kutte: I had the same experience when I was traveling along the west coast of the US and most people I met also told me that the scene became more diverse not only in terms of gender and queerness but also in terms of active POC in their scene. I guess also in these places there is still a lot to do and that there are still many people who have to fight for their space in the punk scene, but it seems to me that the punk scene in Europe is still far behind. What the reason for these different developments could be is hard to say. I hope it is just a matter of time! As Olaf said, there are many LGBTQI* activists here too, who do a lot of great

stuff, but my impression is that there are also people, who are involved in the hardcore and punk scene, who see an opening of the structures as a thread. I don't want to make this gap any wider as it is, but I believe that the LGBTQI* activists are seen often as opponents. It is all about the fear of losing privileges, of losing the comfort of not having to ask myself why and how am I part of this excluding and discriminating structure and how can I change this. I saw a lot of resistance from people who organize shows or have bands to even deal with the fact that all these structures are almost exclusively cis male and white. And if they are willing to consider it then the probable result is that they say they couldn't find another person for their band or another band for their stage. There are many people, even friends of ours, who support the idea of a more diverse scene but when it comes to actions, their priorities are set often somewhere else.

After all this negativity, I also want to mention that there are nevertheless many examples where people have become better about inclusivity. For instance, we have a festival in Leipzig, the Zoro festival, which exists already for many years and punks from all over Europe go there. This year, for the first time, it had a really diverse line-up in terms of gender and ethnicity. You could tell that the music was as important for the organizers as the question of who is performing it.

MRR: Being part of the Contraszt! records family, what is it that bonded you to this label over all the years? Who else is part of this inner circle of punk friendship?

Kutte: I guess it's love! No really, there are so many nice people in that circle of friends. I think the friends we made in places like Köln or in Hamburg are one of the best things which came with the band. In both cities people organized a show for us in the first year we played live. Honestly, those shows were awful! But we had so much fun together that they kept inviting us nevertheless and Philipp, who runs Contraszt! even released our records. In those circles we don't feel like being treated somehow differently because we are an all-female band but as friends and that's the best.

Fritte: I think it's mutual hatred. *[laughter]* Nah...one love!

Olaf: Generally, it is just great to experience this scene whose members are supporting and empowering each other. Competition, exclusion, power struggles and all this shit—that's part of our everyday life and unfortunately it does not simply stop at left-wing subcultures. Some may call this small part of a scene we are talking about a bubble, but as recent reality mostly sucks we are delighted to take at least a bit advantage of it.

Made: One of our most important companions were definitely our friends Levitations— an all-female punk band from Berlin. We were both in the same situation when we met, both bands had just played their first show. Since then we played many shows together and our bands even did four tours together. It was so cool that every night on stage there were at least two bands with only people who identify as female. It was a really empowering and supportive atmosphere and a lot of fun. That made it easier not to feel so self-conscious all the time.

Olaf: At this point we also want to mention and say thank you to our friends from Leipzig who also run a little DIY punk label collectively called Abfall Records which supports friends with releasing their music. They also helped release our record.

MRR: What kind of music are you listening to the most at home, with headphones while cycling, when you are sad, while you are angry, beside doing punk? Or is it all about punk music? And why is that?

Kutte: Recently I listen to a lot of pop, R&B and hip hop. During the last years there were so many great artists coming up with new sounds. Some—like Abra, Kelela and yes, Beyoncé—I love because the sounds are so minimalistic and they work a lot with their voices. Others are just really cool rappers like Angel Haze for example. When I listen to punk it is often older stuff.

Made: Um, I developed tinnitus this year! Actually I like it quiet these days...

Olaf: It's all about Bonnie Tyler!

Fritte: Beyoncé forever.

MRR: Any final words, anything you wanna spread?

Kutte: We talked a lot about friendship and mutual support. But of course it's not all about having fun together and feel comfortable. With this right-wing shift in the last years it becomes more and more important that the punk DIY scene becomes more political and connected with other left activists who share similar goals. My hope is that maybe one result of this ongoing shit is the rise of a more powerful leftist movement across the borders. It doesn't exist, in my opinion, in Europe right now, but it could.

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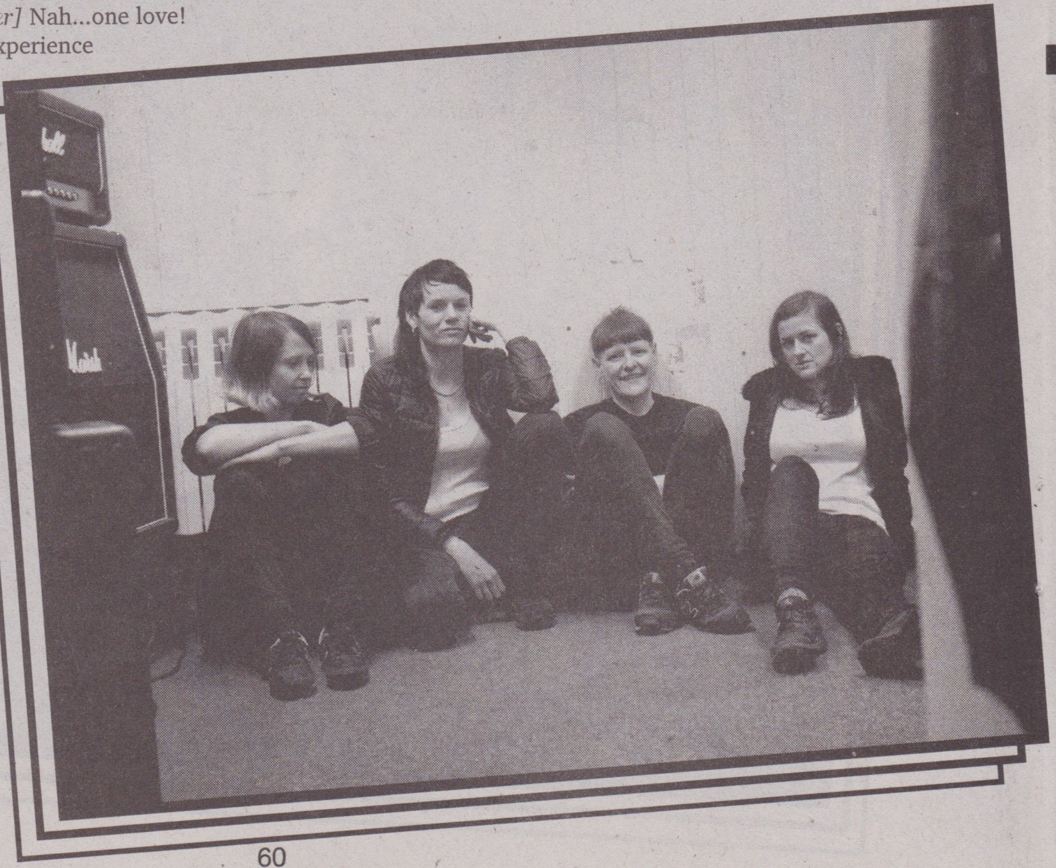

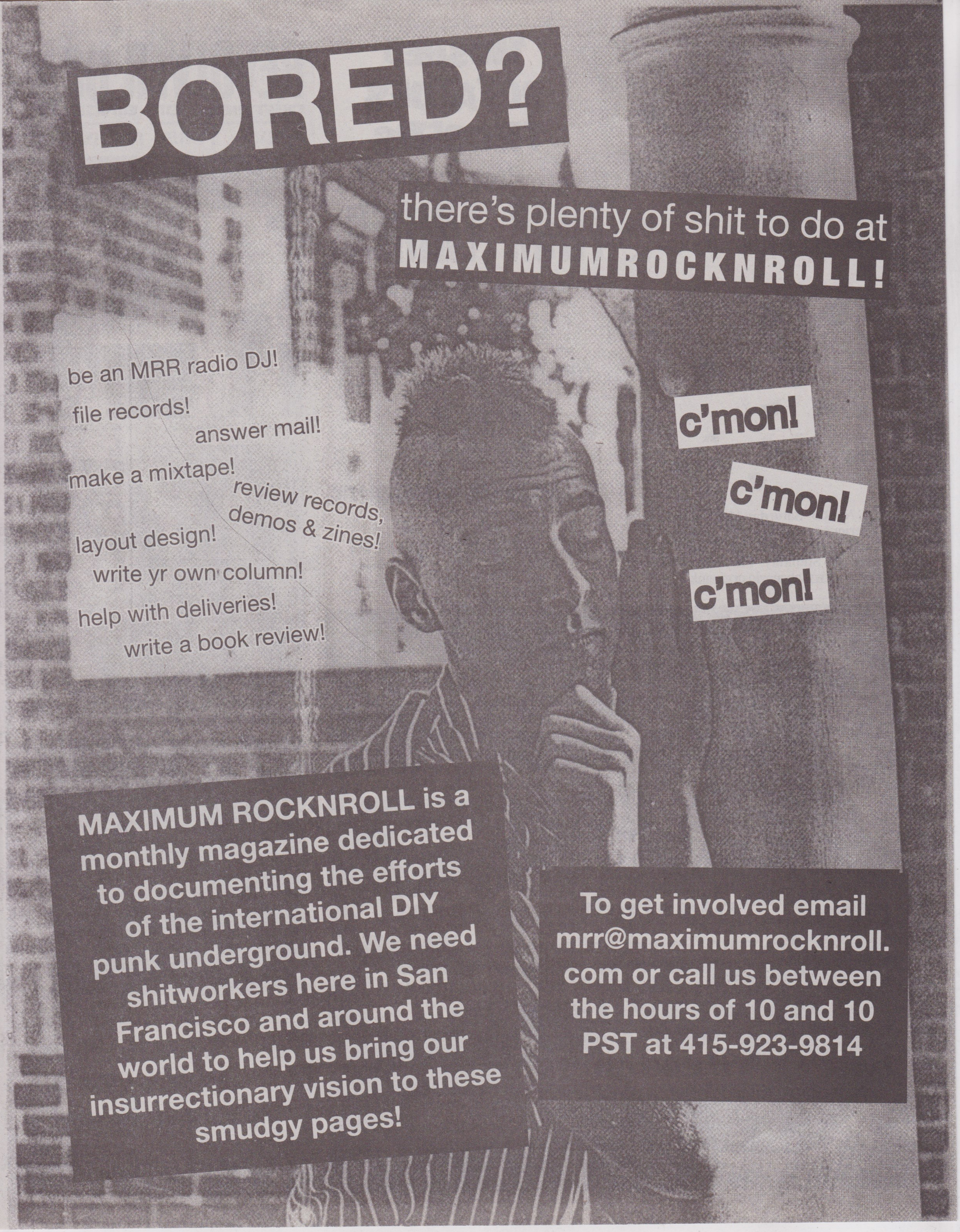

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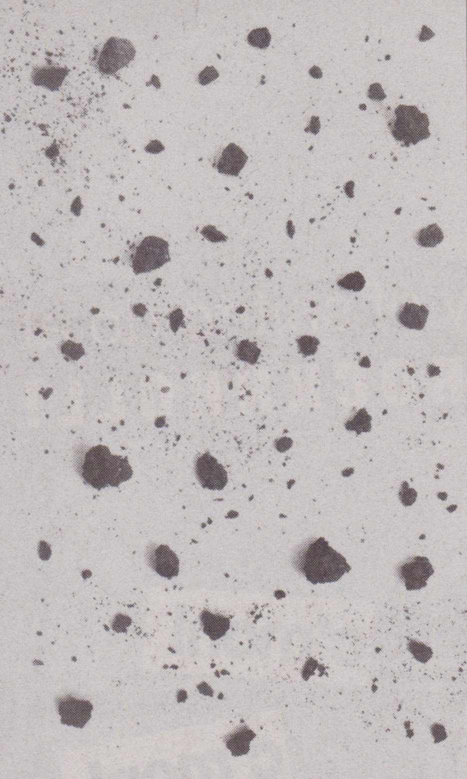

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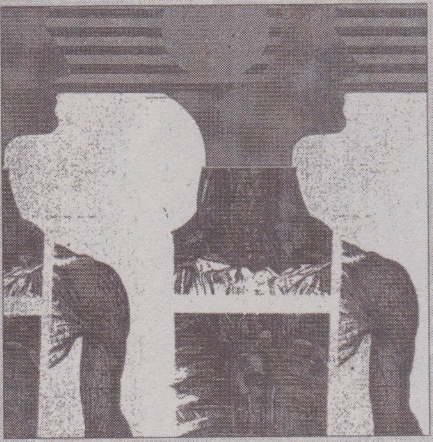

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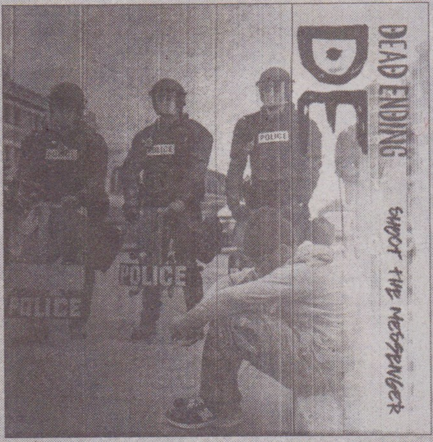

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Our story starts where the West begins: Fort Worth, Texas. The year was 1980. It was at the decade's dawn that a band called the Ralphs came to form. To document their rise and fall, we're joined by Vaughan Bean, AKA Von Beat. He was the founding drummer of the Ralphs and is credited with the 1981 solo release of Nuke Wave Music. He's tried his hands at various styles, from blues to rockabilly to punked-up pub rock, and he now plays with former VVV labelmates, the Fort Worth Cats.

Interview conducted by D. Morris. Photos provided by Von Beat.

MRR: For starters, what initially sparked your interest in percussion?
Von Beat: Well, when I was younger, I remember seeing the Richland Rebels Marching Band play at pep rallies. Their drumline really captivated me...and so did watching surf drummers in the beach party films of the sixties.

MRR: And when / how did you start playing drums?
When I was seven years old I got a snare drum and when I was ten years old, I got my first drum set. I was maybe fourteen when I sat down in the playroom of our house at the time, and it was to the song "Mean Mr. Mustard" by the Beatles that I actually synchronized the kick, the snare, and the hi-hat, to really come up and play in a beat.

MRR: Was the Ralphs your first experience playing in a band?
I played in a couple of bands in high school, but my first paying gig was with a band called Flight, featuring my friends Stuart Reid and Luke Ellington. We first played for a spring dance at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches in 1976

MRR: Were there any drummers that you were inspired by?
I always hated wimpy drummers—if you would just "tappity-tap" on the snare, you bore the hell out of me! I was into all sorts of cool drummers back then, like Bill Bruford, Stewart Copeland... Keith Moon was one of my favorite rock drummers, so I always had a loud style. I was more into rock but Billy Cobham was someone that really blew me away as a jazz drummer.

MRR: And from your experience, did new wave represent a sort of "out-with-the-old and in-with-the-new" mentality?
No, it just seemed fresh and energetic, like, "let's do something

THE RALPHS

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creative that doesn't sound like everybody else." We did not have any desire to sound like everybody else.

MRR: So, at least to your thinking, new wave wasn't an outright replacement for the rock music that preceded it.
Right. It was more music in the present moment.

MRR: Can you recall your first exposure to punk / new wave?
I was a student at the University of Hawaii, in the summer of 1977. When I left Hawaii on my way back to Fort Worth, I met a friend from L.A. and stayed at his house for a week. We went to Tower Records on Sunset Boulevard and I bought the first Devo single, along with the Weirdos and a couple other singles.

MRR: And what was the first punk band you witnessed live?
I think the first punk band I saw here in Fort Worth was maybe in '79- it was DOT VAETH GROUP… that sort of band was kind of difficult to find back then...I remember trying to connect with other musicians, like "I need to find some people to start a New Wave band with!"

MRR: And how did the Ralphs come to form?
Somehow I met Tom Huckabee [of the Huns] and he told me about a guy named Ralph, who was trying to start a New Wave band. So it was arranged that we meet at a gig with the Fabulous Thunderbirds, who were playing a New Year's Eve party at the Texas and Pacific building, an old railroad building downtown. That's where Ralph and I met. At the time, I was as good of a guitar player as a drummer, but we found another guy, Ray Calvitz, to play guitar, and I thought: "well, y'know if drums is what we need, I'd be more than happy to play drums." Then came Mike Winter, the bass player, who was the only guy in the band that really had a lot of experience. He was actually a jazz guy...he used to play tuxedo gigs, but he was tired of the jazz scene—it wasn't interesting to him—so he was like "yeah! I'm ready to get rid of the stand-up bass and start playing New Wave!" The four of us got together at Ralph's house and decided that we all clicked together pretty well. That was probably around January of 1980.

MRR: On the subject of the name of the Ralphs, Ralph himself was once quoted as saying "that's just what people called us." Is it true, more or less, that the name just stuck?
Yeah. That pretty much sums it up

MRR: And was Ralph thought to be the brainchild behind the project?
He was, initially, but then we all stepped up to the plate. It was definitely a group effort. Ralph wrote the majority of the songs but I wrote songs for the band (namely, "Vegetable Romp") and so did Stingray.

MRR: So would you say that you were all pretty fashion-forward?
Absolutely, and as far as fashion goes, Ralph was really into fashion! He had all the New Wave clothes! I refer to Ralph as like a New Wave Elvis—he really exemplified the New Wave frontman. He looked the part, he played the part, and it was all him. He was full of energy, and he was happy to share his energy with the audience! His fervor for fashion led him to open a clothing store in England, and he now runs Hollywood 5 & Dime in Dallas.

MRR: Was the scene in Fort Worth well-established when the Ralphs came about?
In the beginning, there were very few New Wave bands. When things started, it was like a fuse was lit, and when that first firecracker went off, there weren't really that many places to play and there weren't really that many bands. It was a sparse scene and it was difficult to find venues that supported Punk

and New Wave. We were really on the outskirts, but then a few hip people realized that we could maybe get something going here. So whoever had New Wave bands or venues back then, were like, really cool, forward-thinking people.

MRR: Can you tell us about the Ralphs' stage setup?
We had a TV that we would prop up, and there was a cut-out that said "The Ralphs" plastered to the screen. We'd tune in to Channel Seven or something...just some static channel, so static would flow through the TV next to us while we were playing. This is the same TV was featured on our single for VVV Records.

MRR: And what was the crowd reaction like?
We were ten tons of audio energy—we played loud, people liked it, and boy, they responded! People danced on tables... it was wild! It was all about dancin' and partyin' to the max! And after the gigs, we'd all go somewhere and party 'til dawn.

MRR: In Cowtown you also had a fair share of critics...
VB: Oh, yeah, there were all these... Lynyrd Skynyrd and ZZ Top-type bands and boring blues bands. Let me ya, if you played New Wave...we were the ultimate freaks! But it's funny, y'know, some of those guys from these blues bands would turn their noses or think "what's this all about?" They had a bad attitude towards New Wave. But when it took hold, I'd see these local musician guys who thought they were cool come in and see us, and we'd blow them away! But you couldn't convert one of those guys to a New Wave guy, y'know what I'm saying? It's like, if you were a New Wave guy, that's what was in your heart and your soul. It wasn't like you could just be a ZZ Top guy one day and then be a New Wave guy the next. They were hung up in their own world, but I'd watch 'em slowly come in and leave with their hair standing up, going "wow! I've never heard that much energy!" A lot of these guys, they'd never played one song on stage at the energy level that the Ralphs or some of the other local bands would would've played at.

MRR: Were the Ralphs a political band?
No, we weren't really a political band, we just cared about music and being the catalyst to let people party and have a great time! We heavily rocked and partied with the people. Dancing was the main thing—everybody pogo-danced and did their own weird, unique dances.

MRR: What were some of the local bands that you held in high esteem?
In Fort Worth, the Fort Worth Cats and over in Dallas it was NCM and the Telefones. I would say that along with the Ralphs those were four of the main players during 1980/81. Then more people came on the scene.

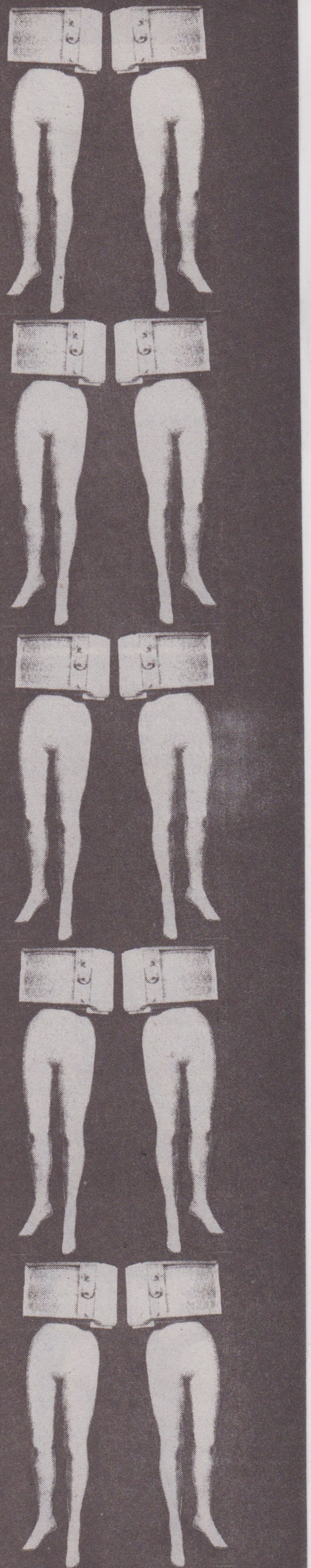
MRR: Can you offer us your impression of Bobby Soxx?
I knew Bobby Soxx, and let me tell ya, he was definitely an antisocial person! He didn't like too many people, but he liked me and Ralph and most New Wave musicians. I just remember Bobby Soxx was really an idiot savant in some ways. He was wild and he was the real thing when it came to punk music. I mean, he was a great frontman for what he did.

MRR: Moving on, there seems to be some contention over whether the Ralphs were punk or new wave. I think it's safe to say that you identified more as "new wave"
Right. Our band was New Wave rather than punk, although there was a punk element in our music. The word "punk" seems to have survived as the descriptor of that era but really I never thought of myself as a punk and neither did anybody else in the band. We considered ourselves New Wavers, but the term "New Wave" has disappeared, and punk has replaced it as a description for that. A lot of the other people that we played with also considered themselves New Wave bands (and not punk) but, there again, it's all labelled in as punk now. New Wave was a more musically sophisticated version of punk— it had a little more texture and form, but it was all kind of the same.

MRR: Can you tell us a little about the recording process with the Ralphs?
We recorded some songs on an eight-track at a friends studio and recorded a couple of other ones at Trax Studios in Dallas, where Bob Hickey (who has worked with James Taylor, Linda Ronstadt, and Pink Floyd) engineered. We were gonna release the latter recordings, and then the original Ralphs broke up. We had this potential record and then it was stuck away in my closet until I was approached about eleven years ago to put it out.

MRR: So you supplied the goods for what was to become the *Zeros—No Ones* comp?
Yeah. I had kept the master tapes, then Ralph had the two songsfrom the secondary Ralphs [featuring David and Doug Townsend of Dor Vaeth Group / Superman's Girlfriend] and we stuck 'em all together for the sake of documenting the Ralphs.

MRR: What were some of your early experiences playing outside of north Texas?
We played at Raul's a few times, and the Continental Club, down in Austin...We went to play in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, where we played at the Blue Grotto. It was near downtown Tulsa, in kind of a hip area of the city, and the club used to be a seafood restaurant in the fifties and sixties. Inside it was decorated to look like



THE RALPHS

you were in a cave—there were stalactites and stalagmites. There was a really avant-garde look to the place. The Ralphs would fill that place up and we'd rock it 'til closing time—I think they made us play our song "Teddy Boy" four times at the end of the night.

MRR: So you had a pretty decent-sized following in Tulsa?
We a good following up in Tulsa and Oklahoma City—there were a lot of really cool New Wave, punky people up there back then. A lot of them would drive from Oklahoma, all the way down to Dallas, to hear us play. We drew people from all around because you couldn't hear this music everywhere, and it really wasn't on the radio either. It was kind of a back-alley, cult scene.

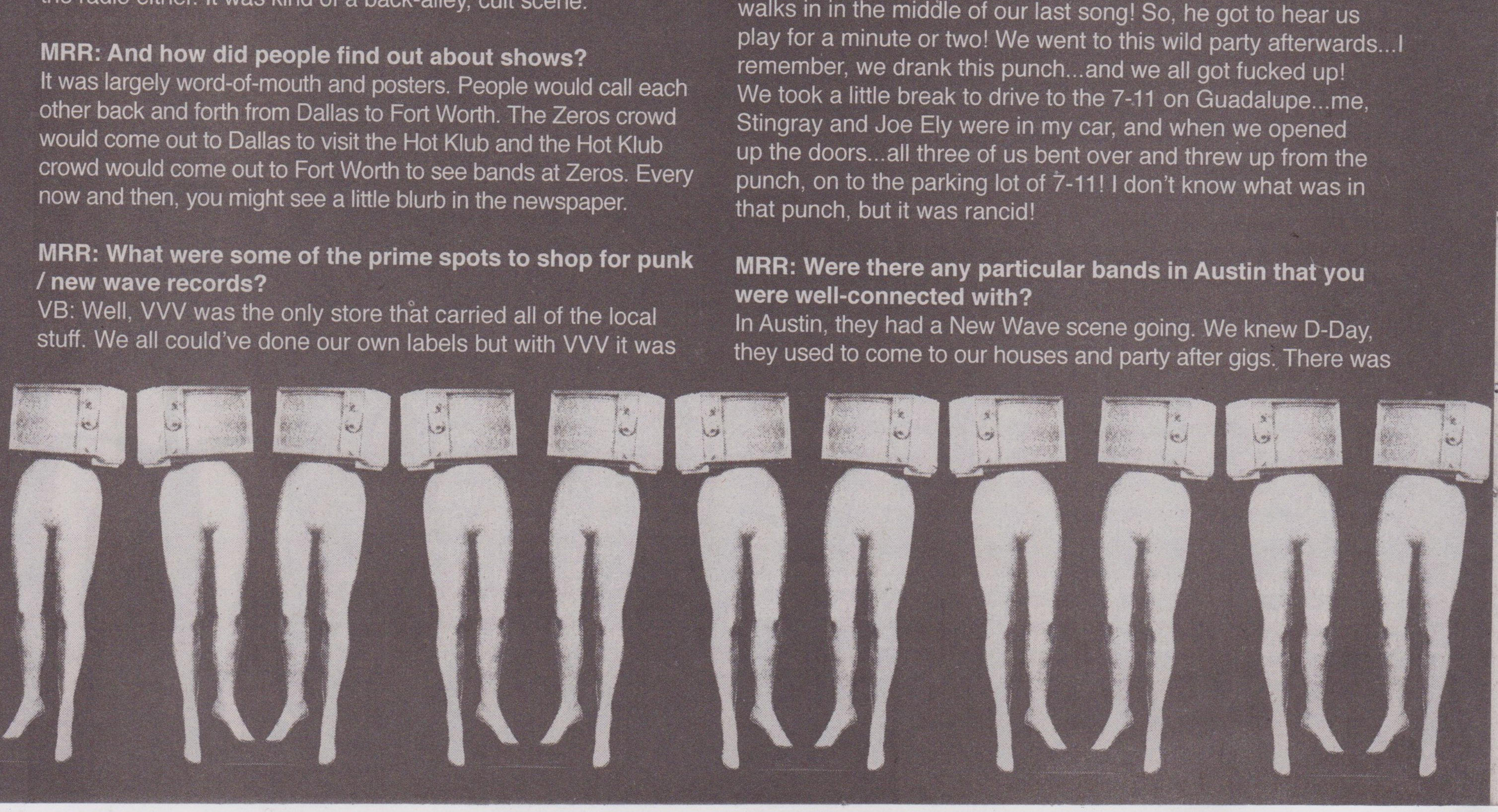
MRR: And how did people find out about shows?
It was largely word-of-mouth and posters. People would call each other back and forth from Dallas to Fort Worth. The Zeros crowd would come out to Dallas to visit the Hot Klub and the Hot Klub crowd would come out to Fort Worth to see bands at Zeros. Every now and then, you might see a little blurb in the newspaper.

MRR: What were some of the prime spots to shop for punk / new wave records?
VB: Well, VVV was the only store that carried all of the local stuff. We all could've done our own labels but with VVV it was like, "let's make a statement for Dallas / Fort Worth." There were a good number of bands on the VVV label before it bellied up and the store followed suit. Everyone said "might as well all be a part of the same revolution here, and have some kind of identity to put out there," so we all put our stuff on VVV, and we'd leave records there to sell. We might go gigs and sell some to our friends, but that was really the only store where they were for sale.

MRR: Do you have any interesting stories pertaining to Raul's?
Well, the lady who got us a gig at Raul's knew Joe Ely who was opening up for Chuck Berry at The Paramount Theater in Austin. She wanted him to come check out the Ralphs and she got us backstage at their gig. We were all excited about going and meeting Chuck Berry! Although I haven't seen any, there were some photos taken with the Ralphs and Chuck Berry. He was kind of distant and a bit of an asshole, I hate to say. He seemed to have a bitter attitude towards life. We watched him play poker backstage, and I thought about walking up and talking to him, but having our picture taken with him was about as much as I wanted to crowd him...Anyways, during his set we were all at the back of the stage, watching him play his stuff. About midway through, a tall blonde grabs me by the arm and drags me center stage- I'm thinking "what in the world is going on here? Why is someone pulling me to the middle of the stage with Chuck Berry?" Well, on the other side of the stage I see another girl pull some guy on stage and I'm thinking "two couples...oh, I guess I'm supposed to start dancing!" So we're all dancing, and Chuck Berry scoops on through, doing the duck walk! I was there thinking "how cool is this?"

Then the Ralphs went to Raul's to play our gig, and Joe Ely walks in in the middle of our last song! So, he got to hear us play for a minute or two! We went to this wild party afterwards...I remember, we drank this punch...and we all got fucked up! We took a little break to drive to the 7-11 on Guadalupe...me, Stingray and Joe Ely were in my car, and when we opened up the doors...all three of us bent over and threw up from the punch, on to the parking lot of 7-11! I don't know what was in that punch, but it was rancid!

MRR: Were there any particular bands in Austin that you were well-connected with?
In Austin, they had a New Wave scene going. We knew D-Day, they used to come to our houses and party after gigs. There was



a band called the Textones that we opened up for, and they had Kathy Valentine, who later joined...what's that band? [sings chorus of "We Got The Beat"] the Go-Go's! I remember Stingray loaning her his Les Paul when her guitar was messed up.

THE GIGOLOS

MRR: Did the Ralphs ever go on tour?
We had a tour to California—it was maybe December of 1980. Ralph and I both had friends in L.A. So, we booked a gig in El Paso, where we played with Teenage Popeye (which was a great three piece). And then we played a gig in Tempe, Arizona. Then we played at Madame Wong's in L.A. We were supposed to go up to San Francisco to play at the Mabuhay Gardens, but we kind of ran out of money and I was like "man, I don't have the money to make it up to San Francisco and back to Fort Worth"- so we had to cancel that, which Ralph was very upset about...but hey, if you're out of money, you're out of money: that's where the quarter runs out

MRR: Were there any highs or lows from the Ralphs tour?
I can't really sit here and say really high or low part from our little tour there and back, but, y'know, we did well and everybody liked us in El Paso, and everybody liked us in Tempe. They liked us in L.A. too, but in L.A. there was a considerable amount of New Wave bands and we were one of many. Around here, we were a real, unique oddity. I'll say this: we were one of the few bands in the Texas scene that left here to go do something.

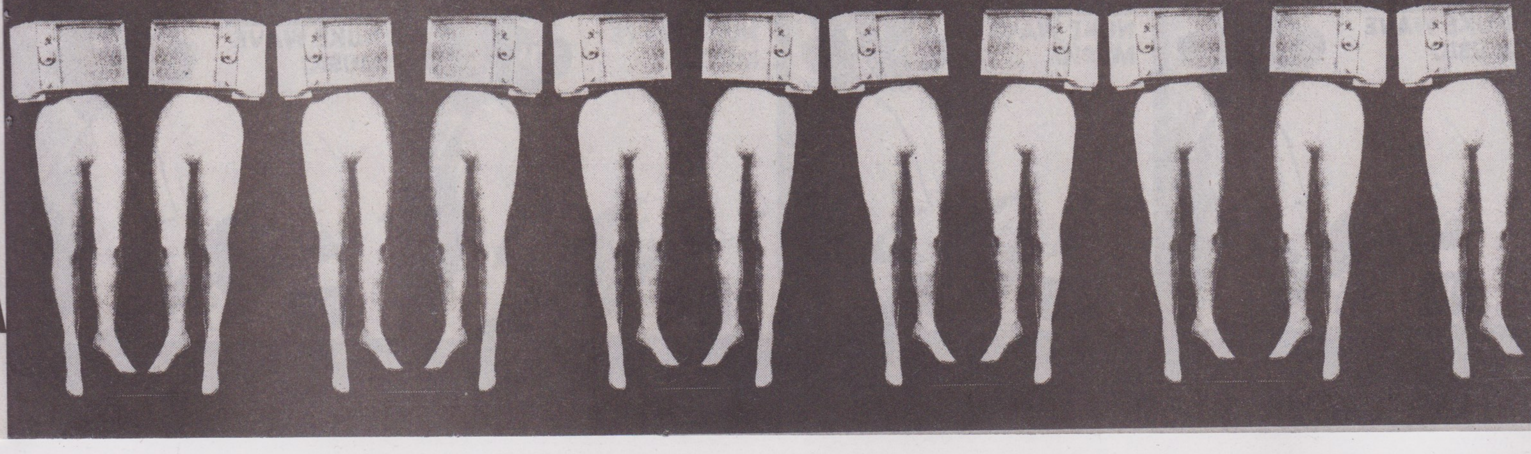
MRR: Can you tell us about falling out with the Ralphs?
Sure. There was a club owner that owned the Speakeasy. They had some crazy idea about the club sponsoring the band and they wanted us to wear black hoods over our faces so nobody would know who we were. They wanted us to play as the Hoods. I was against the idea. But Ralph was really taken by this guy. That must have been the last straw. I remember that I went to go visit a girlfriend of mine in Chicago and when I came back it was like, suddenly, I'm fired. I was like, "What the fuck? What do you mean, I'm fired? I'm one fourth of this band." Ralph was all like "Blah, blah, blah… blah, blah, blah… you don't wanna do the Hoods." So, I was like "Well, fuck you! You go do the Hoods." After that Stingray left and Ralph kept the band going by recruiting the Townsend brothers to play.

MRR: It was around this time that you struck off on your own.
Right. I had some songs that I'd written for the band. I decided "Fuck y'all! I'm gonna go record a couple of my own songs." So I got two of the guys from the Fort Worth Cats to help me out with the Von Beat record. I did guitar, drums, synth, bass and backing vocals, and the lead vocals were contributed by John Siebman, AKA Monty Cyclops.

MRR: Were "Synthetic Environment" or "Of Course I Care" intended to be Ralphs songs?
I think "Synthetic Environment" was gonna be a Ralphs song. Maybe I wrote "Of Course I Care" later. But since I had 'em in my head at the time, I figured I might as well go to Dallas and record them, for whatever purpose.

MRR: What was your inspiration for the those?
For "Of Course I Care" I'd say I was sort of inspired by Devo, and "The Amazing Journey" by the Who was what I ripped off in the middle.

MRR: Was the record well-received?
For the most part. There were people saying that I ripped off Devo and this-and-that. Y'know, different people have different



opinions. I read somewhere, some asshole wrote off Von Beat as “synth trash.”

MRR: And that’s you pictured on the sleeve?
Yeah. I bought two nuke suits. I was like “well, if these motherfuckers are blowing shit up, I’ve got a low-level nuclear suit to wade through the doo-doo.”

MRR: Were you happy with the outcome of the *Nuke Wave Music* single?
I was proud of it, but at the time I never would’ve thought that people would still like it some thirty-odd years later, or that a new generation might find it cool. I’m almost sixty now, and for me, it’s cool to know that a new audience has found this stuff.

MRR: Of course, at the time, it wasn’t like you were consciously making a collector’s item
Exactly. I was proud of it then, and I’m still proud of it, but yeah, I never would’ve thought that at the time. I’m surprised that

MRR: Would you say that you were in the right place at the right time?
Oh, I feel like I was definitely in the right place at the right time!

MRR: From what I understand, Von Beat was a one-off studio project and wasn’t meant to be an active live band.
Right. I had other songs in my head. If I’d have thought it was going to go somewhere, I probably should have gone back in and recorded a whole album, but I never did.

MRR: And after the release of your single, you later joined a group called the Gigolos, correct?
VB: Yeah and y’know, about ’84, whenever the Gigolos came along, all the local bars...they’d done away with all of the New Wave venues so we...although we were New Wave guys in the Gigolos, we kinda had to start playing some copy songs with a rough edge to them, such as Rolling Stones songs...Kinks songs...David Bowie songs...stuff like that. We also had some original songs that Stingray (from the Ralphs) and I wrote [he was in the band; so were Pat Conley from Dot Vaeth Group and Mike Gilbertson of Blinddate]. We had a few original songs, but the rest were cool copy songs. And no, we did not play any ZZ Top or Lynyrd Skynyrd!

MRR: And you later added a second drummer?
VB: Yeah, Mike Little, and boy, two drummers really made a heavy rhythm section! People liked to dance to it. it was more high energy

MRR: Was that move inspired other two drummer bands such as the Butthole Surfers or the Feelies?
We got the idea from Adam Ant. They had two drummers, so I thought that maybe we should try two drummers. So we did, and it worked. All of the New Wave venues were gone by then, so we had to adapt to regular rock’n’roll venues.

MRR: So it seems there was a prevailing “make-it-or-break-it” mentality. After the Gigolos dissolved, you tried your hands at playing the blues, correct?
Yeah, I learned the blues after New Wave. I’m probably the only guy in town that played New Wave, then rock’n’roll and *then* became a blues guy. Blues never interested me at all back in the Ralphs / Gigolos days, but because I was still around here, in Texas, it was like “well… you’re a musician. What’s there left to play now? Well...blues.” So I kind of got in to that. I joined Edd Lively and the Blues Movers. Edd Lively used to tour with Freddie King. You know how many blues guys would give their left nut to say that they toured with Freddie King? So I was lucky to play with people that knew what they were doing, and they liked my energy level because I played a little bit harder and peppier than the average blues guys did around here. And the Texas blues legend, Robert Ealey would play with us about half the time, so it was a good mix for Texas blues.

MRR: Lastly, you’re now playing in the reformed Fort Worth Cats—would you care to touch on that?
VB: Well, the Fort Worth Cats have been my friends since 1979. I knew all of their songs and we were all friends ’cause we all played together. There were times back then when I would fill in as a replacement drummer. I was a natural to fill in for Johnny Roullet, their drummer, who died about five years ago from a heart attack- So yeah, I play for the Fort Worth Cats now.

MRR: That pretty much brings us full circle...have you got any final statements?
VB: Unless we’re trying to write an encyclopedia, I think you’ve got everything you need!

For more information, look up “Nostradamus USA.” Von Beat has published several works under the name of Victor Baines, and has contributed to several documentaries on the subject of Nostradamus.
Email him at: vbean@airmail.net

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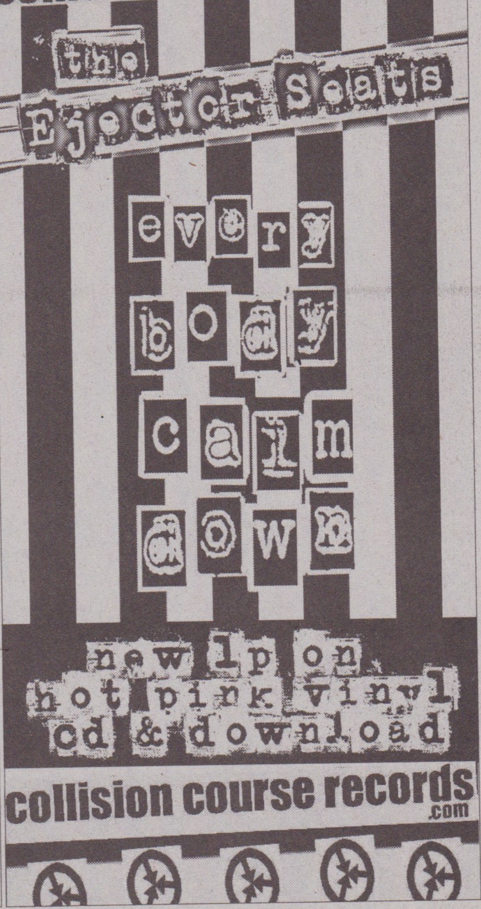
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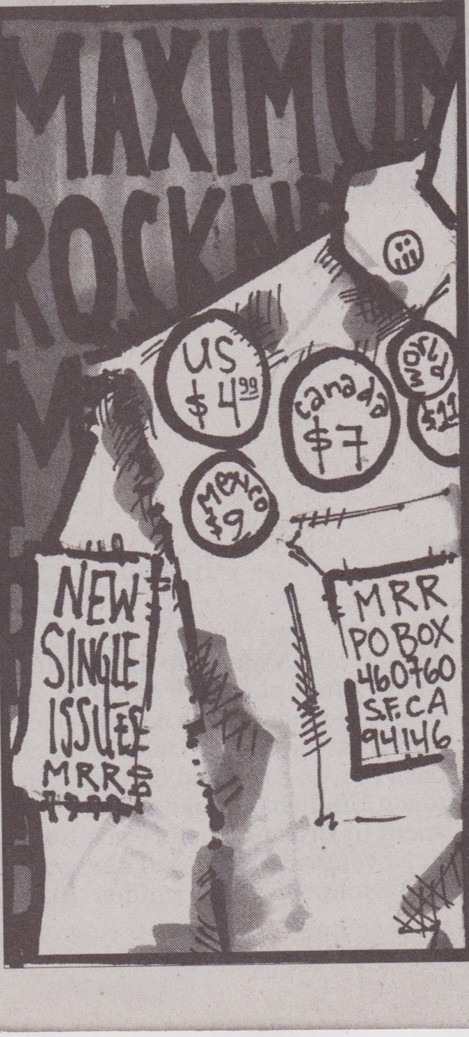
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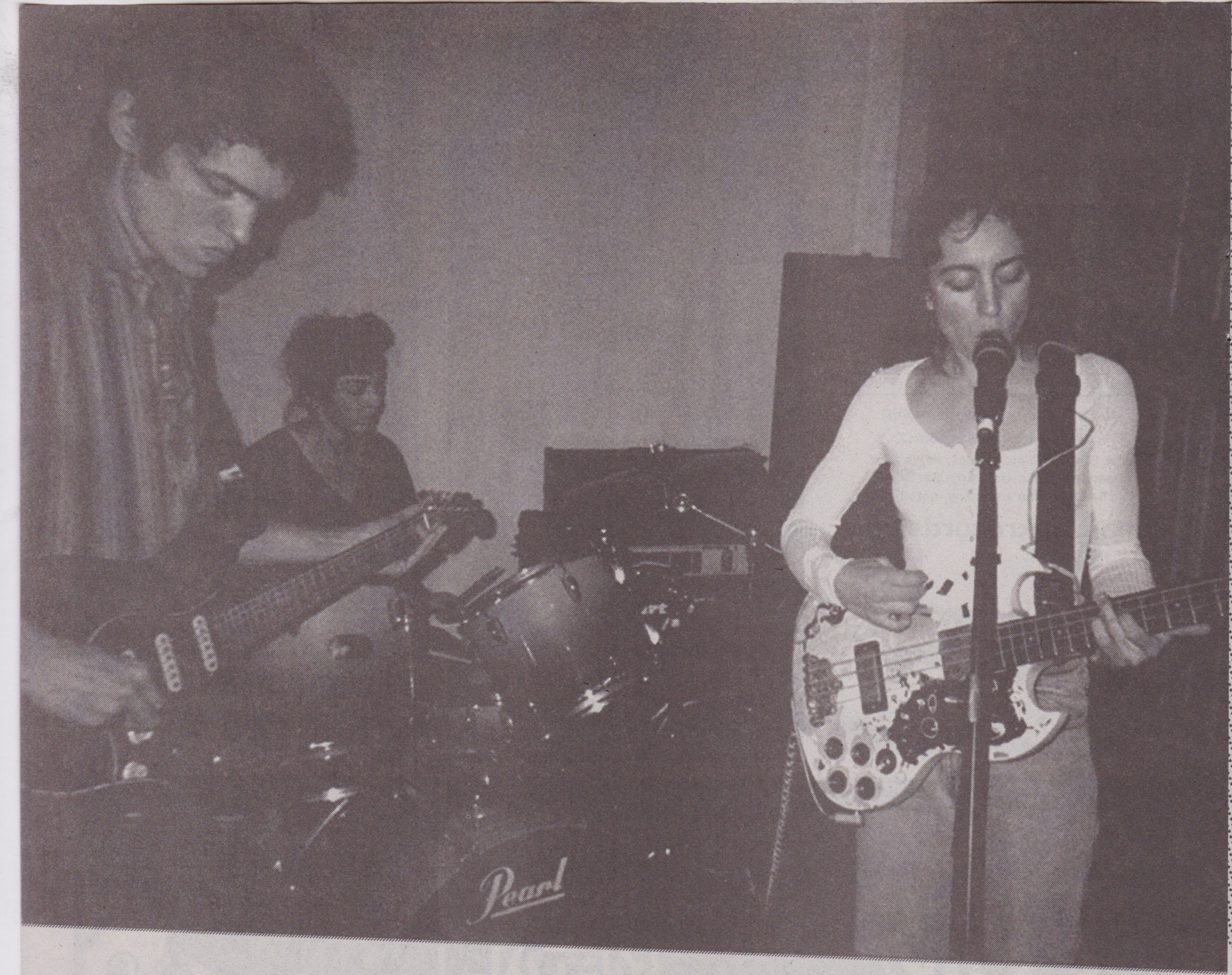


BENT

Photos by Callum Cusick and Harriet Frasier-Barbour
Interview by Madeleine Laing

This is a strange time to be doing an interview with Bent. After playing regularly around Brisbane for years, the three-piece have been on a kind of hiatus for almost a year, after Heidi Cutlack, the band's singer, bass player, and lead songwriter moved to Japan to teach English. I spoke to her for the few months she spent in Brisbane before she headed off to California in November. Talking to her, guitarist Glen Schenau, and violinist and drummer Skye McNicol now has an element of nostalgia, as we reflect on the City of Brisbane in the time of Bent.

It's strange the way a band can come to feel owned by a city. There's hundreds (or, if you're in Brisbane, tens) of bands playing regularly around town at any one time, but only once in a while does one come along that plays music that just feels like the place. Bent is one of those bands for Brisbane, the third biggest city in Australia.

It might be because of the way they use their environment to make music. There's so many objects in their songs; all the jingling, thumping, slapping, twanging on their records is made with pots and pans, bits and pieces, stuff around their houses. "That's the sound of Bent," Cutlack says, "we write and record the songs and then add all this stuff on top, because that's what makes it us, that's the stuff that's in our life and what we're around all the time."

Bent in its current form started with Cutlack and McNicol—though Cutlack previously played as Bent with two other girls who she says were, "a bit too wild." Schenau joined a year or so later, and their early rehearsals were done on Cutlack's parents' property in Eudlo, a coastal country town on the Sunshine Coast, around an hour north of Brisbane.

Cutlack explains how she got McNicol involved: "when I was just left by myself I thought about who I wanted to play with...I kind of knew Skye and thought she was great, I'd heard that she played drums...but that was actually a lie, she'd never played them...But I was very into the idea!" McNichol says.

"We'd record in the heat in the washhouse [a kind of laundry shed, removed from the house] at my parents' house. At first I didn't really know how to say what kind of drums I like so I would just kind of, make noises," Cutlack continues. "Heidi actually fundamentally shaped my drumming style with her communication, which was kind of abstract and scattered," McNicol says. And in the shed there was this special cymbal made of aluminum foil that was like *ding ding ding*! Lots of stuff like that influenced us early on."

"When we've recorded we've always kept an open mind to what we can use as instruments" Schenau says, "the way we use our instruments is pretty abstract anyway so it's not too much of a stretch to start using other things to make music."

"We've got beer bottle tops and ping pong balls and water containers, a coffee grinder..." Cutlack adds.

"There are [the cracking, crunching noises] also the sounds that Queensland houses make in the heat and humidity, they creak and breath," says McNicol.

This knack for beautiful and romantic metaphor seems to come easily to Bent. Cutlack, McNicol, and Schenau are heart-on-the-sleeve kind of people, sensitive and in-touch with their emotions. Which isn't always a good thing. They readily admit that they've had their share of tension "There's definitely been some pretty difficult band practices, but going away has made me realize how similar we all are," Cutlack says.

"Even though we're all really different people, we have this aesthetic common ground that's kind of rare," McNichol says, "it's hard at the time but looking back on it we see we were all struggling with the same things from different angles."

Cutlack agrees, "We're all so sensitive we're all expressing ourselves in one room and there's not always enough space to fit it all in."

It's precisely this sensitivity that makes them such an interesting punk band. The music is sometimes chaotic, disjointed and loud, but sometimes soft and straightforward. The lyrics are intensely personal, dealing relationships and romance. But their attitude is 100% DIY. They're doing their own thing without screaming fuck you at everything that's different. Heidi explains, "Bent has like these short 30 second post-punk, no wave whatever you call it songs, but then there's really sentimental pop soft heartfelt stuff. I don't even care that they're completely different genres, that's the sound of Bent."

"That's the thing with Heidi's lyrics," McNicol says, "they're sometimes so abstract sometimes so personal. It doesn't outwardly resemble other punk scenes maybe in terms of fashion, but it's punk in the way it's subconsciously rebelling against conforming to any kind of expectation of how you should express yourself, or not express yourself."

Because Bent are so untethered to any particular genre or sound, they've played with all kinds of bands. In Brisbane they regularly played with Piss Pain, a short-sharp grind-inspired blues punk band; Cannon, a pub pop band that you can't help but dance to; Sydney 2000, a blues rock band with some of the catchiest hooks ever written; Scraps, sweet and heartfelt infectious electronic dance music; and plenty more local and national bands that can't be pigeonholed or summed up in a few lines.

Cutlack says that sometimes they're uncomfortable with the spotlight that's placed on them as a band with two female members in a scene that's still predominantly male. "A lot of the time we get asked to play these girl punk, girl scene bands," Cutlack says.

"Yeah 'ladies night!' or whatever," McNicol continues, "and I'm like 'well, I'd love to be on the bill if you think the music is good, but if not that's ok.' That's another thing that's really natural to the Brisbane underground scene—people feel really free to present themselves anyway they want and probably no one will even mention it. It can be really non-judgemental." However, she admits this sense of openness doesn't always translate to who you see on stage. "I counted it up the other day and I've been in nearly twenty bands but I've played with about five women, including Heidi. You don't think about it because they're your friends and great people but it's actually really imbalanced."

"We get reviewed a lot as 'female vocals' as if that's a genre," Cutlack says, talking about one common comparison that especially pisses her off. "People always say we sound like the Slits. To be honest, I had never even listened to them! When I heard them I'm like, this is cool, but they're not an influence at all. The vocal may be similar coincidentally. But people in reviews or whatever act like we're totally the same."

Heidi initially says that when they play with more traditional punk bands she changes the set list to avoid disrupting the vibe, which draws immediate protest from the other two.

"No that's the most punk thing you can do!' McNicol says, 'get the violin out. Bring on the emotions. Not much is tougher than owning your own feelings."

While this sense of openness and raw self-expression is common to all three members, the meat of the songwriting is done by Cutlack on bass, then Schenau and McNicol add their own parts. "I had songs and a way of thinking how I wanted to make music and I was influenced by DNA as well as local bands like Psyants and all these zigzaggy sounding bands," Cutlack says, "and I mixed that with all my girly bedroom crying stuff and Skye and Glen just got that straight away. I never really had to explain it."

"No one dictates to anyone else," McNichol agrees, "and I think that's common not just to Bent but to this whole funny little scene that we're in. But no one intellectualizes it the way they might do in other cities. It's very open and accepting but no one really thinks about it, you can do whatever you want and change and no one questions it."

"I love the feeling of when I'd be in my bedroom and be like 'I'm gonna come up with a new Bent song,'" Cutlack says, "and I'd write something and think 'Oh that's just some '90s Nirvana alternative rock thing,' then I come back and make up something as though I'd never heard another piece of music before in my life and realize oh yeah that's Bent! And then I'd be so excited to see what Glen and Skye were going to do with it."

Before she started performing music, Cutlack went to shows recording bands around Brisbane on VHS tape and making videos. Her interest in video and the visual aspect of music making comes through in Bent's videos and artwork—her playful but heartfelt aesthetic, wonky use of colour and chaotic movement and patterns.

The band says their visual focus is often on turning mundane, everyday things into something strange and chaotic. Places and scenes from their lives become curious. "We make videos like, on the roof at the house that we hang out at all the time, in the backyard but then the cinematography is unhinged and the movement is really chaotic," Cutlack says.

McNicol says that these themes have developed naturally, "because Heidi's aesthetic is so strong, it feels normal...but you think back years later and remember that there was bread nailed to the walls... but then the color of it and everything it seems so natural still!"

"And we weren't rebelling against anything," Cutlack continues, "I think that's really fundamental, that it doesn't feel angry or angsty...it's just our own world, with definitely a lot of emotion."

Bent have a kind of experimental approach to making music, which Schenau says has a lot to do with them coming from musical different backgrounds, and the thriving experimental scene in Brisbane when the band formed. "That scene's been in flux in the last few years, but before that there were venues like Real Bad Music and Audio Pollen and nights like Disembraining Machine at Alchemix that I think definitely warped our approach to music."

These experimental spaces drew all three members of the band, though they didn't really know each other yet. They were all active in the scene—Skye has played everything from country to folk to abstract arty noise, and Schenau's ditch-dwelling rock'n'roll band Per Purpose became highly regarded in the Australian underground scene. They all moved to Brisbane from smaller towns outside of the city, and McNicol says in hindsight she sees the three of them coming together as a kind of inevitable force. "It's like we'd be circling in to meeting each other for our whole lives—first from all the little towns we were from where we were the weirdos then we were swirling around going around down the plughole to meet each other."

This is a common feeling around Brisbane—it's the kind of place most people with serious ambitions leave in around their mid-20s, to go seek Melbourne's promise of more culture and better drugs. Most of the people that are left either came from an even smaller town, or just can't imagine going anywhere else. McNicol has a perfect analogy for the feeling; "I was watching that Werner Hertzog narrated film about the plastic bag that really wants to go to that garbage island in the Pacific Ocean, and then it's there and having a great time with all its friends and I was like, that's Brisbane."

"There's a dance that you can only do here, too, the Brisbane noodle," McNicol continues, "the arms move independently from the body...you can't act like you're too excited either."

"Oh yeah, we should mention everyone is a bit depressed," Cutlack adds, "But it's OK."

Bent has toured around Australia, playing a sold out show in full-on rock venue The Tote in Melbourne with Melbourne underground messiahs UV Race. Though they count their more regional shows among their live highlights. McNicol says she connected to Australia's remote, northernmost city Darwin especially. "I could relate to it, there's this beautiful ocean but it's full of crocodiles and you can't go in it...and I love the heat."

"I feel way more relaxed in places like that," Cutlack agrees.

"We're never been put in a really normal, really regional area," Shenau says, "I've

always been curious how it would go down. We've never been in any really alien situations—we usually play with bands that are similar, or other bands that we play in."

Though McNicol remembers one show in Darwin where their abstract ideas didn't go down so well with the staff. "There was that place in Darwin where the sound guy was like 'you don't know what you're doing'...but that turned out fun because there was all those wheelie chairs. All these office chairs with wheels on them in the venue, it turned into a real wheelie chair mosh pit!"

Cutlack's imminent departure lends a sense of urgency to the next few months in the life of Bent—they've got another show booked, and want to record some of the songs that they never got down the first time around. They're even teasing an America trip while Heidi's there.

"The thing is," McNicol says, "America's really really far away! Other towns in Australia are really far away, you could drive for weeks, you could walk for years before you get to the other side of the country. And America is even farther than that. But I want to go for romantic reasons. I want to go because I've watched too many American movies."

The interest is there—but those things like money, time, those complicated emotions that still pop up within the band can still get in the way. Ultimately though, the band are hopeful that there's still more to come. "I think that's one common thing we have, we might have our interpersonal drama, but we're all still really excited by doing it," McNicol says.

"I'm always really surprised that other people are still into it too," Cutlack says, "our demographic seems to be middle aged men. We're always getting messages from dudes who want to add us to their special underground record collections...Things might change, but I'd never call this trip the death of Bent."

Bent have a 12" Vinyl entitled* Snakes And Shapes *out on Sydney Label Moontown Records, and a 7" named* Mattress Springs *out on Emotional Response.

What do you expect from a new band from the ashes of Acrostix, D-clone plus a guy from Contrast Attitude? Zay is a new band which has been talked about since even before they were formed. Their 1st album Cry for the Moon *was just released in July and some of you may already have been blown away (or maybe confused?) by their sound.*

Interview and translation by Satoshi Suzuki.
Originally printed in the Japanese zine El Zine *issue #26, published in July 2017.*

MRR: You all have been active and well-known in the scene for long time. Why did you decided to start a new band with this lineup?

Shin: I had been playing in a band called Acrostix for about thirteen years, but the band became less active and I started to think that I wouldn't have any more experience with them. At the same time, I had some anxiety that I would become a nobody if I stopped playing with them. And this was also when many touring bands started to come to play in Mie prefecture where I live, and I had no choice to quit all activities with them. I was just telling myself to keep going. I have often said a message "We should move and do something" at shows. But even that I was not able to overcome that desire—I quit.

I have thought before that I should quit playing when I don't feel any tension onstage. I started audio engineering for shows at Vortex (a punk shop located in Yokkaichi city with a show space on the second floor) when the shop moved to the current location five years ago. It was a totally new experience for me and I was more nervous about touching other bands' or musicians' sound rather than myself playing a show. But the whole experience was exciting and a totally new and fresh thing for me. I was looking for that kind of excitement.

I was worried about what I should do, but I thought that one of the best options for moving forward would be to start a band again. And I felt it stronger day by day. I started asking myself: if I do start a band, who would be in it? I wanted someone who would kick my spoiled ass. I was thinking about starting a band in Tokyo or Osaka as there are absolutely more people there. But one day I noticed that one awesome guy lives in a nearby town, Hiroshi of D-clone.

I had played shows with them, but never hung out with them before. So I emailed him and said "Let's do some jamming just for fun", and he visited me right away holding his guitar and multi-effect pedals. *[laughter]* Since then we visited each other and talked about the plan of the new band.

Hiroshi and Gori used to talk about playing together in a band before, so naturally Hiroshi asked Gori to join this band in order to have dueling guitars.

Hirozo: I was doing D-clone for about 8 years. It was great! We were able to play widely, both domestically and internationally, thanks to many people's support, but it was not the band's desire to pursue "music" (I made that image by myself though), so we broke up. I wanted to do something new with music and wanted to play music seriously. And then Shin asked me to play with him. I already had a plan of a dual-guitar attack, and when I was thinking of who could be my guitar partner in terms of technique, taste in music, I immediately pictured Gori.

Gori: One day Hiroshi told me that he has an interesting idea. I thought it will be amazing to start a new band with the main guys from these experienced bands. I had a hunch that something new and different wound happen, so I decided to join in. I also play in Contrast Attitude, but I had wanted to play with Hiroshi someday. So I thought why not do both?

MRR: How did you come to name the band Zay?

Shin: I have hurt many people and made many mistakes. Everyone except little children commits sin more or less. But that sin never disappears even if you believe in a religion and you can never totally forget them. You must live and survive with the sin. But there would be something about your sin that you will find out and understand in future that can help you grow, and when you notice it, the sin could become your treasure. So "罪 (sin)" and "財 (treasure)" means "Zay" (both characters can be pronounced as "za-i"). There are almost no English words for the idea behind band's name, but we wanted to keep the same concept, so we named it Zay. Some have said to us "You took the name from the band Zygote," but it is not true. *[laughter]*

Hirozo: We had some other candidates which were extremely uncool. *[laughter]*

MRR: Before the name Zay came out, we heard that these three guys from these bands were going to start a new band, and saw a flyer that you guys were looking for a drummer for the new band and it was kind of topical at that time. Then you released the demo CD-R in the end of 2015 and started playing shows. How were you feeling at that time and what was the reaction you received?

Shin: We three in the front gathered for a reason, so we thought we could find a drummer quickly as well, but it was not that easy. We wanted someone who wants to play with us and didn't want ask anyone. So we made flyers for drummer recruitment. We waited and waited, but never heard from anyone. *[laughter]* One guy who likes L.A. metal contacted us and we jammed, but he didn't fit in with what we wanted to do so we didn't take him.

We three were in the studio and making songs little by little, but without a drummer, we were far from completing a song. One day Hiroshi suddenly said "Though I want to play the guitar, I will start playing drums to bring the band ahead." It impacted me. I never considered that as a possibility. I don't think I could do that. So Hiroshi started going to a drumming school. *[laughter]*

After that, we did some rehearsals with Hiroshi as the drummer. But the sound was a bit different from what we originally talked about. Hiroshi is just a beginner at drums, and that seemed to prevent him from writing songs. We could easily find someone who could play the drums as well as Hiroshi, but there's no one who could play the guitar like him. So I told him that he should play the guitar and not the drums, even though he went to drum school. As I told him so, I felt I had to proactively find a drummer, we couldn't wait anymore.

At a show at Vortex, I was talking with Vondo from Povlacion if he knows any drummers who would be be a good fit for this band, and he mentioned that Yuji, who used to play in Ada+Max, was not currently in any band. I know Yuji and also knew the reason why he quit Ada+Max, so I just gave it a try and contacted him. He was really interested in playing in this band, but at that time he was going to a professional school and he couldn't decide on whether or not to join until he finished the school and got a job. So we decided to wait for half year while giving him some pressure. *[laughter]*

MRR: When Yuji, who is my real life brother, told me that he is going to play in the band, I was excited too. Yuji, how did you feel when you were asked?

Yuji: After Shin asked me to play with them, I was so excited that I lost focus on my studies and got bad grades. *[laughter]* I like all the bands they have been in, and as I got to know them more, I found that they are more interesting to me because they have so many ideas and listen to so many different kind of music. I liked the idea of doing something new so I decided to join them.

Shin: So before we start doing rehearsals with these four, we went to a bar several times and just talked about the idea what kind of band we are going to do. It wasn't that easy to get to here, but this difficulty later became a strength. We started rehearsing in April 2015, and just kept working on it so we could start playing shows within the year of 2015. And we started recording in late summer for a demo, and the demo was released in November, then we organized the first two shows in December which were free shows in both Nagoya and Yokkaichi. We made 300 copies of the demo at first, which sold out almost immediately. It was surprising. The demos were all handmade. We sewed felt, which we printed on, and we also handstamped on the CD-Rs. Making the demos by hand cost us a lot of time that we could have used practicing, so we stopped making any more after 500 copies. Thank you to those who bought it, and we are sorry if you couldn't get it.

Hirozo: I already had a clear image of the sound that I wanted to achieve, so what I needed was technique and knowledge to achieve that image, which took some time. I played the drums until Yuji joined and we tried to build our style. Around the time Yuji joined, our style became more distinct, so it went smoothly until the first shows. I wonder what the reactions were. I think it was clearly divided into two types: one was excited, the other was disappointed. *[laughter]*

Gori: I was often said that many people had an image of "Wall of Noise" if me and Hiroshi teamed up. With full-stack amps with maximum loud volume. But I didn't think about playing in Zay that way. I wanted to play with my different knowledge and taste of music. We built our songs and sound with much consideration and suffering. I didn't care about people's pros and cons reaction to the demo because to me we made a good one.

As for live shows, fortunately some bands which we did not have any relationship before asked us to play with them, which we happily did. Those people didn't know what kind of bands we have played in before, so they didn't have any preconceptions of us. And it is exciting to see reactions from them or audiences at those shows.

MRR: Why did you make the first two shows free?

Shin: It was because we wanted to show our gratitude to those who had been waiting for us. Going to a show costs a lot, like you need money for gas, tolls, parking, train fare, etc. just to get to the venue. Plus booze is not cheap at venues. The entrance fee is usually like $20, but it costs more overall with all of the other stuff factored in. We are amateur musicians, however people pay to see us. Yet we are also "professional" in terms of getting some money out of it, so we made the first shows free not to forget that point. I think that because it was free, the show at Vortex was totally packed. We were so happy.

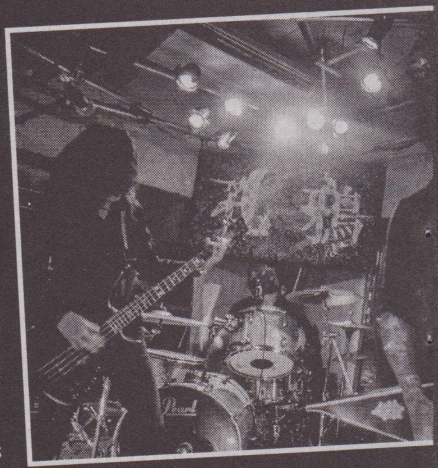
MRR: Ok, now let's talk about your first album *Cry for the Moon*.

Shin: Yes. It's from our label Zay-Nin records, which is distributed by MCR.

Gori: Later pressings will be issued by an overseas label.

Shin: We organized the debut show in Tokyo by ourselves in August of 2016. Around that time many of our friends asked us to play in Tokyo, but we couldn't choose which ones to play with. Honestly, I thought they should have waited to ask us until at least after they had seen us play live. Even though we released the demo, they wouldn't even know that our sound is far from what we have ever done. So while some labels asked if they could possible release it, but we already decided that the first album should be released by ourselves.

And now, thanks to Facebook, people can offer to release a record too easy. Especially overseas labels. After I put the artwork for the album on Facebook, I received so many messages saying "I want to release it on tape" or "The LP should be released on our label" from all sorts of people that I've never met before. I appreciated it, but it is impossible to leave our important music in the hands of someone who has never listened to our music. As Gori mentioned earlier, I bet they just expected a wall of noise from us. We wanted to release our album on a label who listened to the album and really liked it.

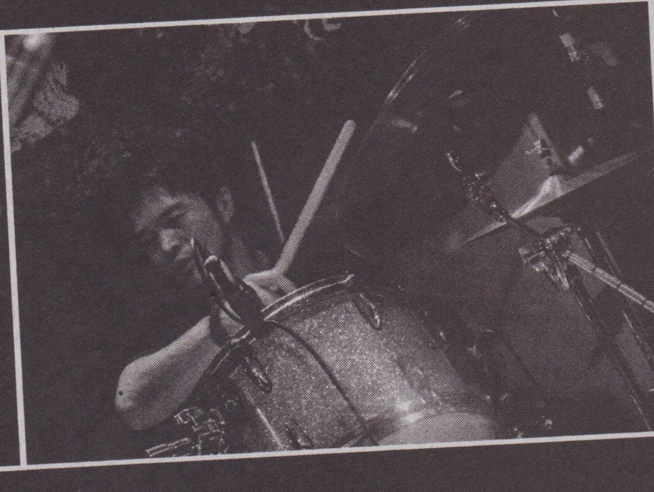


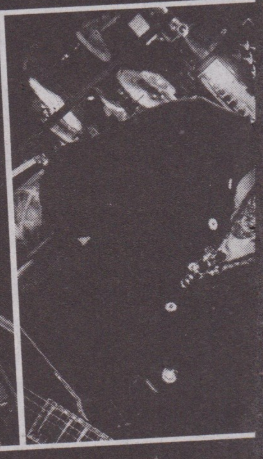
MRR: Musically, I think Zay is in the extension of each of your former (current for Gori) bands, with Shin's Acrostix at the core. But it has been developed more and you guys are doing totally new things which your former bands didn't do, like the shredding guitars remind me of current extreme metal bands (still with a touch of Sacrilege though). You also have twin-lead guitars or clean tone vocalizations, and some approaches similar to post-rock rather than Amebix-like arpeggios. Did you have any concept or something like what you want to play with Zay from the beginning?

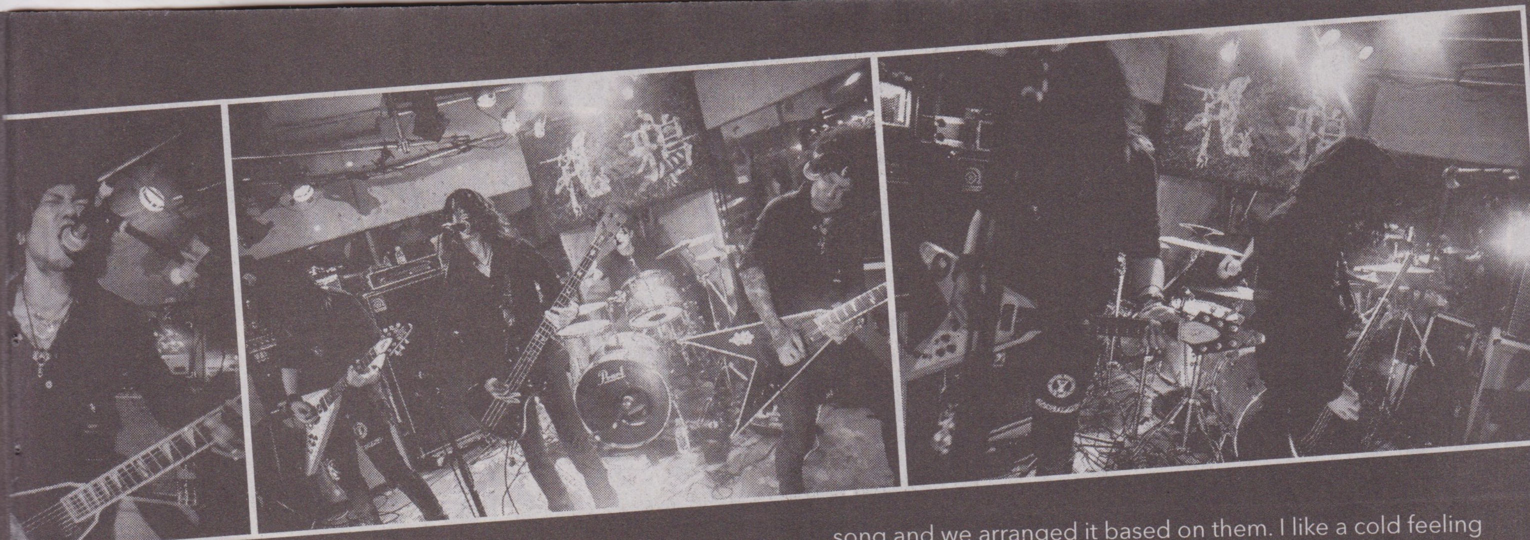
Hirozo: The original style of this band was my idea. And other elements each of us has were added to it until our style became like it is now. I wanted to express a sort of Yin and Yang with the music. We have our fundamental styles of playing which we are expanding by listening to many different kinds of music so it will deepen Zay's style more.

Shin: Three different frontmen took vocals in each of our former band so naturally we decided on having triple vocals. The three of us in the front write songs, but the feeling of each of the first songs we each made were inconsistent, so we decided one person would write songs until the band is on track. So Hiroshi took the songwriting role and we arranged it with everyone. Roughly speaking, I didn't care much about the style of sound with this band as long as I feel that it's cool. I have confidence in the songs made by Hiroshi and Gori. And everyone listens to various styles of music. Sometimes I even feel like we are making a new genre of music. It takes a long time if I write both songs and lyrics so I trusted writing songs to them. But I made some just in case they had trouble making songs so I could suggest some ideas. *[laughter]*

I like writing lyrics and other member says they like my lyrics so I took that part. I asked them how they feel or what they want to say and I translated their







feelings with my own words. So it becomes the words of Zay as a collective and not my own.

Musically, our goal is to make our heavy parts heavier and our clean parts more beautiful, but we are still struggling to match that vision.

Gori: I personally like extreme music and had an interest in arpeggios with clean tones, so I have always wanted to express that part of my taste someday. I'm always thirsty for new music and we will have more things to challenge and at present it is far from my ideal sound, so I'll try writing new songs with new elements.

MRR: Just for reference, tell me some bands that you have recently been listening to...

Shin: Recently I'm listening to Mono, Russian Circles, Agalloch, Om, the Sabians, Amebix, Tau Cross, the Mad Capsule Markets, Wolfgang Japantour, Endon, Flower Travellin' Band, etc.

Hirozo: I like anything with shredding. *[laughter]*

Gori: Mono, Tha Blue Herb, Fight It Out, the Chuckers, Discharge, Funerary Call, shuly to 104kz, Juno Reactor, envy, Endon, Uncle Acid & the Deadbeats, Tau Cross, Not II Belikesomeone, and Disclose are often played while I'm driving my car.

Yuji: I've been listening to Victor Griffin's In-Graved, Buddha Brand, and the Cure.

MRR: About the first song of the album "There is No Future in Dreaming of the Past," I think hardcore punk is always challenged by the inheritance of the original sounds of hardcore, even though there is a premise of "do what you want." And doing a new thing and finding the balance between that and the original hardcore sound is becoming more difficult as time goes on. But I feel that this song beats its "nostalgia" in hardcore punk both musically and with the theme of the lyrics.

Hirozo: There is no future in dreaming of the past! That says everything. Zay wants to do new things with its sounds and activity. I hope many people listen to us, but we don't plan on selling out, so we will never kiss anybody's ass.

Gori: Hiroshi brought the riffs and basic structure of this song and we arranged it based on them. I like a cold feeling for clean parts and post-rock-like tone and I wanted to adopt it. I intended to make the melody which you can hum. *[laughter]* In the later part of the song, we added some harmony and twin-lead guitars and things we like to build the song up, then it resulted in a song which beats those images like you said.

Shin: There's an attitude that you keep doing the same thing, and another attitude that you never change. But I just don't want to follow something anymore. I have things which don't change, but I want to enjoy changes inside of me from experiencing new things and get influenced by them.

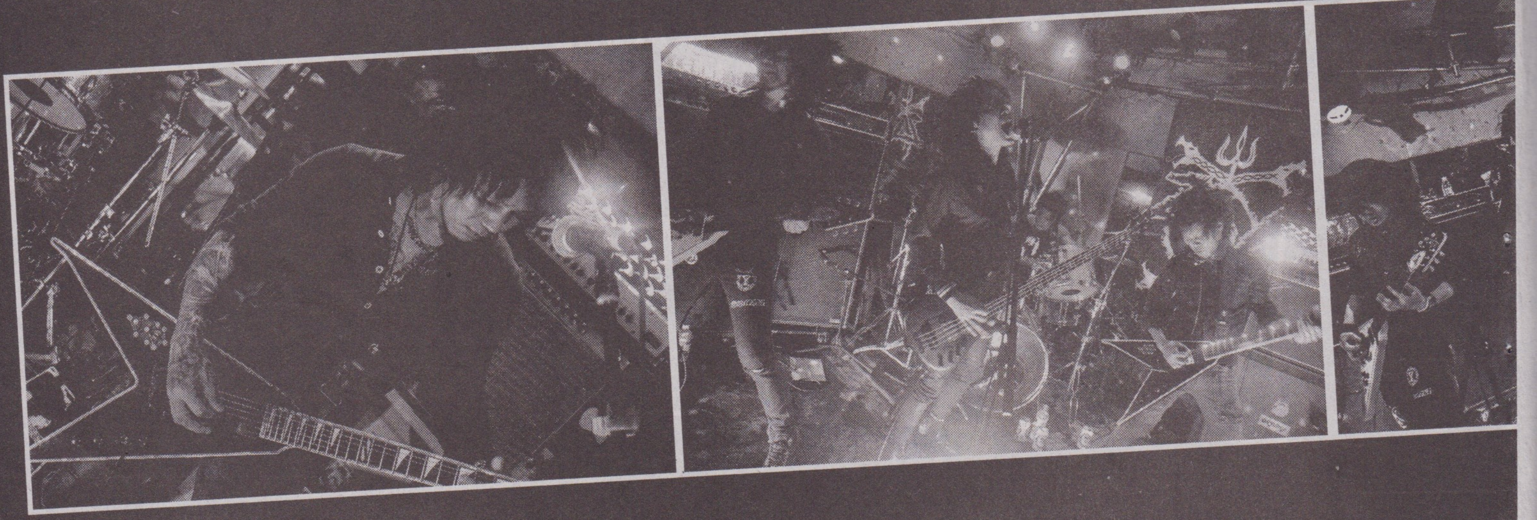
Both domestically and internationally, the current situation where reunion bands get more attention is not a good thing for ongoing bands. It proves that current bands have no attractiveness. There are very few exceptions. Amebix has been my all time favorite of mine. I like all of their releases, but my most favorite is *Sonic Mass*, which they released after they got back together. I was impressed with not only their new sounds but also with the way that they transcended their past.

I have a hard time understanding that most reunion bands are highly appreciated even though they are just a copy of their own past. It is easy to walk a path where someone has already walked and trod down. I'm also one who has walked that path, but now I'm walking in a trackless place fumbling and asking myself if this path is a right one. With no map, and no idea if the direction is right. I just believe in myself, in us and go forward. We just have to believe what we can't see. I'm fed up with copy and repetition.

I might not be punk anymore as I feel punk is just a certain aesthetic, and there would be some people who think Zay is not a punk band. But I don't care. There was no one aesthetic form to punk in the beginning.

MRR: I got an email from Shin about an article that I wrote about Justin Marler, the ex-Sleep guitarist (published in *El Zine* vol.19), and in the mail you said that you value what a person can do to be an individual. And I was happy that there was someone who understands me here. *[laughter]* After that, during a set of Zay's show I saw last year, you said "leave from a crowd" and I agreed with it. What do you think about being individual in this hardcore community? This could be related with what you sing in the song "Four the Wings".

Shin: The majority is always "right" and the minority's voice is always drowned out. The opinions of the minority are not always wrong and they often have some truth to them, but the majority is regarded as correct in most cases. I know that this is "democracy" and this is how organizations are.



But I don't like it and I was not able to adapt myself to the "society" and I became a deviant. There I encountered punk and liked the feeling of freedom that punk has. But it is also true that the same things I mentioned happen in the punk scene.

I have been working hard to make the punk scene in Mie prefecture where I live become more active and now some people call me "the boss of Mie punk." I don't want that! What I have done with good intentions might have killed someone else's ideas. I might not be listening to the minority. One man said to me before "People leave Mie because you are here" and now I take what he said seriously. Even though I still think "fuck you." *[laughter]*

I had been away from playing in a band and it made me to see things objectively and I finally realized: everyone should do whatever you like, do what you want. You should not mind anyone. It is a matter of course. If there is a problem, they should talk among themselves to work it out. People around them have nothing to do with it. It is not group vs individual. All relationships should be individual and individual.

It is not a bad thing to be united to make the scene active; it's rather a good thing. But it should just happen naturally and not be forced. This could be misleading but I don't think I want to drive the scene anymore. I stopped trying to find an answer for the active scene. Like how we should have more audience, what is the best way for it. I was thinking of things in future. You often hear "there are no young punks coming to shows," but it is simply because punk is not attractive to them. Young people are everywhere but just not at punk shows. You would say that it can't be helped because it is a fringe music genre, because it is loud, because it is a special music that doesn't reach out to people in general, because it is punk, so it's fine just to do things for only those who understand it. But punk surely reached out to me. Punk has not lost its power, "current" punk has just became weak. It seems now we are just going inward. I want to send my music out further. To those who say "there are no young punks," have you ever showed up to shows for bands made up of young people? Do you buy their music?

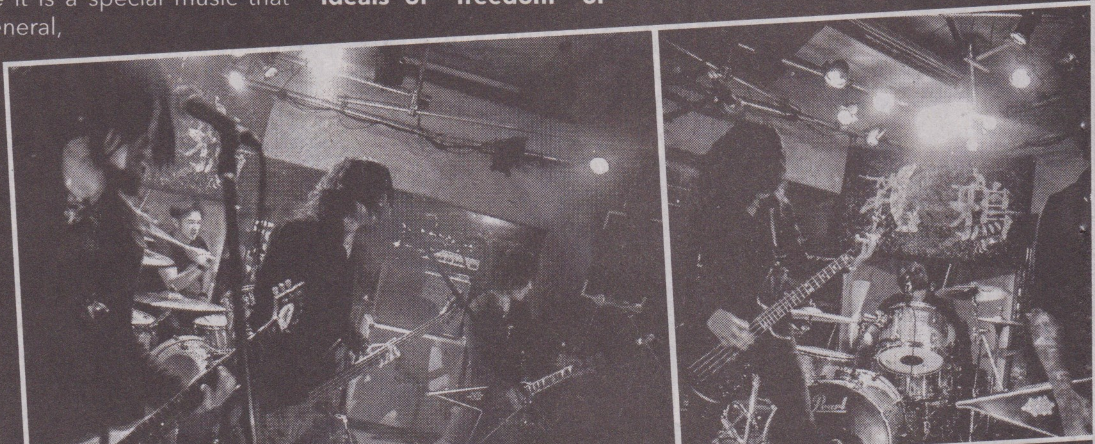
It is a good thing to organize a show with crazy lineups or invite mainstream bands, but it's just a temporary fix. So I think the most important thing is to improve your band. To do so, you have to improve yourself and know the meaning of being individual.

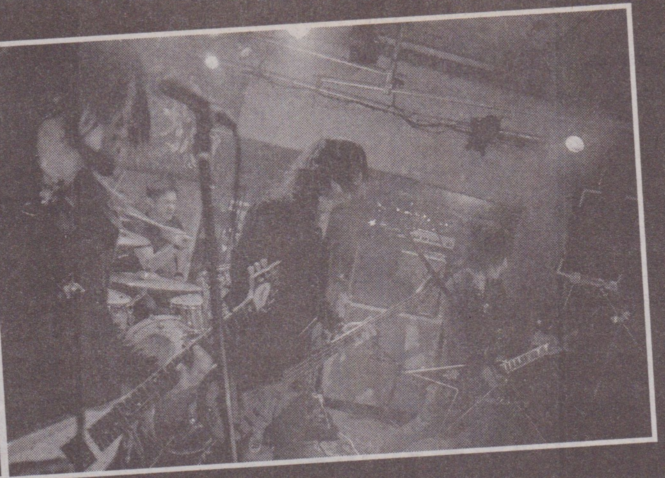
If you want to help the scene, you should just become the coolest band in your town. And it will lead to the phenomenon of an active scene. I realized what we have to do is more personal—it is about yourself.

People feel anxious when they are alone. People complain when they are in a group. I don't say you should be alone. To have a good company and collusion are different. What I want to say is to value yourself more. You can do whatever you want if you can be responsible for your words and actions. Leave from a crowd. You should leave from a crowd.

Hirozo: I used to do things to make the scene active with friends before, but now I realized everything depends on the power of a band. So I have no interest in "blah blah crew" or something like that.

MRR: Shin and Hiroshi, your partners both also play in bands, but I still hear that some women have to quit playing in bands after marriage, even in the punk scene where the ideals of "freedom" or





"equality" are praised. I don't know if that is based on male chauvinism or something else. Do you have any opinion on this as both of your partners are in punk bands?

Shin: In Japan we have those cases not only with bands. Like working. Women have a more difficult time going back to work again after they get married and have children. I have one daughter and my wife plays a band and runs Vortex. So I often spent time with our daughter when she was young. And people around us called me *iku-men* (a man who is proactively involved in child-raising). But that term was made because there is a common idea that raising a child is women's work. No one says *Iku-gal* (a woman who is involved in child-raising).

I don't get it as I don't hear about anyone who had to quit playing in bands after marriage though, but there are many who quit playing after they had a child. But there is a big difference between "I quit playing because now I have a child" and "I want to play in a band but I can't because of marriage."

Since marriage means walking together as two different people who have lived differently, there is always conflict, discontent or arguments. But it is good if two just respect each other's point of view. They are individuals even though they are a married couple. Same goes for children. We have responsibility for them but they are not our belongings.

In my case, my wife is tough and never compromises. I respect her as a person beyond gender and at the same time, she is my rival. I feel like "she lets me play in a band" rather than I play in a band.

Hirozo: I'm a bossy husband so my wife might have hard time. *[laughter]* But we never interfere in each other's activities and we both just want to keep playing. I'm working hard on things just to keep playing music though.

MRR: What kind of bands are you going to play with in future? Any new release plan?

Shin: We don't belong anywhere. So we will gigs with any bands or places if we think they are cool. We have a series of gigs called "The Story Continues" at mainly Vortex in Yokkaichi, Mie and we will have series shows with four bands along with other series of shows of just two bands.

As for future releases, we have plans to release two splits with one Japanese band and one overseas band. So we will work on it and we want to make an EP later. We want to tour next year. We have many things we want to do, but we will just enjoy one by one.

Hirozo: Regardless of genre, we will poke our noses wherever we want to.

MRR: Last words from all of you!

Shin: Survive your daily lives and see you at shows. Thank you for the interview!

Gori: Please check out our first album. We put everything we could do at present in this. And you can expect more from us in the future too!

Hirozo: This album is like our introduction. We will deepen more and more. You can look forward to us.

Yuji: I'm also looking forward to Zay in the future. *Yoroshiku*!

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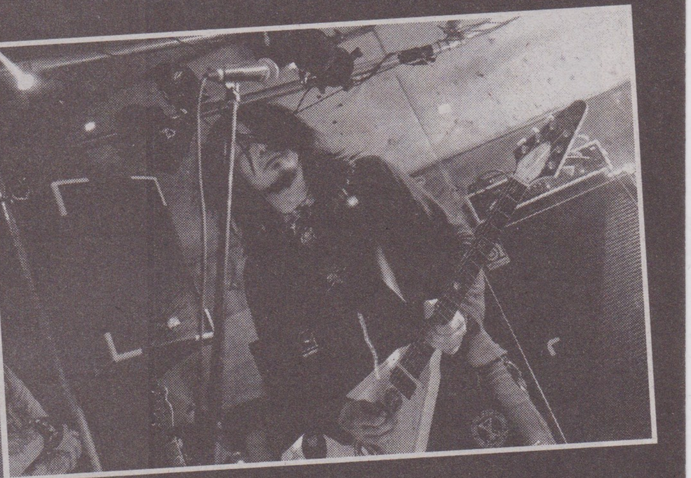

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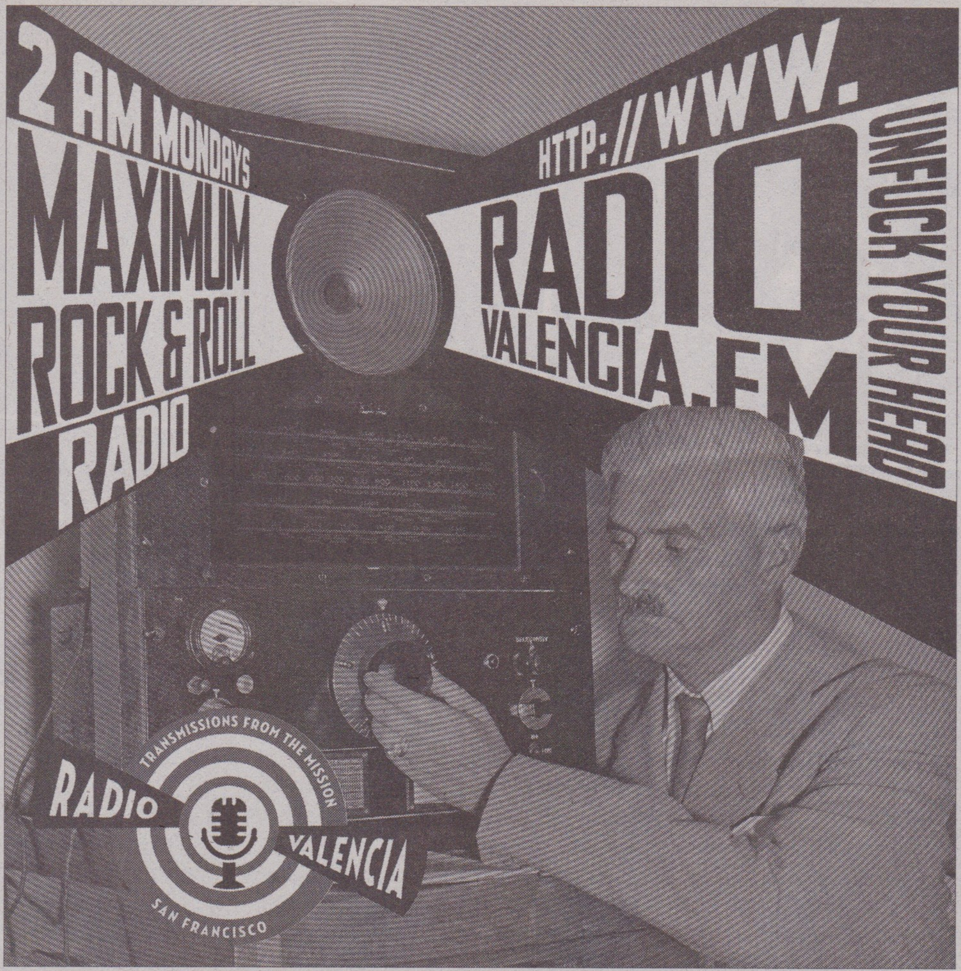
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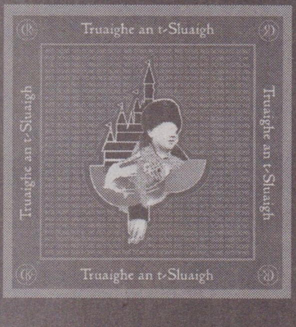
RED DONS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"GENOCIDE" b/w "LETTERS" 7"

Out Now: Red Dons return with their 10th vinyl release and their first new music since the 2015 LP, "The Dead Hand of Tradition". Now in their 11th year as a band, the Red Dons have established a formula of dark, driving punk rock with catchy melodic hooks and the songs on this 7" deliver on that tradition. The 7" will be released in a limited edition of 500 copies with 150 red vinyl copies available only through the band and/or Man In Decline Records.

PAST RELEASES

BURNING KITCHEN

DAMAGED HEAD

PLUS OTHER RELEASES BY:

- Burning Kitchen
- Vanna Inget
- Arctic Flowers
- Damaged Head
- No More Art
- Sarabante
- Concrete Cross
- ИO///Sé
- Oblivionation
- Raw Nerves
- Dissekerad
- Stun Event (ex- Out Cold)
- Cleansing Wave
- Doom Town
- The Nukes
- Spectres
- and more…

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MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

We are always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let us know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. We will go see it.

City Gardens was a club in Trenton, NJ. Randy Now was its promoter as well as a DJ, drummer and music fan who helped the club rise from a dive bar to a successful music venue. He also oversaw its demise at the hands of hardcore. **Riot On The Dance Floor** is the club's story.

The bands are notably the ones who define a scene, but there are a lot of elements that go into putting on the shows and building up the momentum of which the average attendee is probably unaware. **Riot On The Dance Floor** makes the effort to explain what went right and what went wrong at City Gardens. The bands' antics are humorously recalled. As is the drudgery and realities of what it was like to work behind the scenes at shows in the '80s and '90s. Some of the more nefarious activities of Now and the bouncers are glossed over. Though hose could just be rumors—I never went to a show there.

I will say one thing for Randy—he is still doing it. The insane lifestyle of booking an underground club usually wears a person out completely. You never hear from them again. Yet Now manages to trudge on. He is shown introducing a German band for their first US show at a record store; he is DJing on the community radio station; he is seen enjoying bands at a town festival.

Riot On The Dance Floor starts out with Sick Of It All playing their 25th anniversary show at Webster Hall in New York City. There is a room of dudes slamming into each other. "If you get hurt, don't sue us," jokes the singer. After watching the whole film, I still wonder why this scene was in it. The inclusion is tenuous at most, but it should not have started the film. This type of haphazard story telling that makes **Riot On The Dance Floor** dull at times. I have said it before—most music documentaries should be an hour long. **Riot On The Dance Floor** is interesting, but would benefit from some better editing. (citygardensfilm.com)

The Gears' *Rockin' At Ground Zero* is one of my favorite albums, but the band is not one of well-known early Los Angeles punk bands. **Don't Be Afraid To Pogo** tells their story.

The Gears started as teenage music fans that formed a band. They were from Glassell Park in Northeast Los Angeles. Like most bands their environment influenced the music they played. The band members recall neighborhood parties where bands would play and people would sing., and the late night clacking of the train cars in the nearby train yard. Along with the influences of music they listened to while growing up, these elements combined to form the Gears.

Like **Riot On The Dance Floor**, **Don't Be Afraid To Pogo** could benefit from some editing. I realize it is tempting to include everything you have in a documentary. When the story drags, you lose people who have limited or no knowledge of the subject. The Gears' story may not have that much intrigue, but the story is interesting enough. (wondercaprecords.com)

I have never read any JT LeRoy books so I had no personal attachment when the story broke that JT LeRoy did not exist. The persona was a hoax concocted by some San Franciscans on celebrities and the public. **Author: The JT LeRoy Story** tells the story from the perspective of Laura Albert the woman who wrote the books and perpetuated the whole myth of JT LeRoy.

Either you believe Albert's story of her multiple personalities and her belief that JT was one of them or you take her as a confused person who made something up, got too caught up with the celebrity lifestyle and got caught. Both points of view are woven into **Author: The JT LeRoy Story**. It is the viewer's perspective that will sway how this is watched. Mine bounced back and forth.

Would Albert have been published if she simply released the books under her own name without the sympathetic back story? Maybe. Would they have been as successful? Probably not. It is on that thin line that the story **Author: The JT LeRoy Story** rests. **Author: The JT LeRoy Story** is a fascinating, unsettling and unbelievably true story. (jtleroystory.com)

When I moved to San Francisco in 1990 I knew almost nothing about the Grateful Dead. They really never crossed my mind. From my early days in San Francisco I have two memories of the band. I worked a horrible job and I gave these two people I never met a huge discount because they were nice. In return they gave me two tickets to see the Grateful Dead. My coworker and I were going to go see what it was all about, but another coworker really wanted to go so we gave her the tickets. Years later I saw a huge sign in Golden Gate Park saying "We Miss You Jerry." A few minutes later I got to the radio station for my radio show and asked the others there, "What happened to Jerry?" "He's dead", I was told. We proceeded to make fun of him on air.

Jerry and crew weigh heavily on the city of San Francisco. It crosses the line between sad and annoying. Yet, I still barely know anything about them. I was surprisingly interested in watching **Long Strange Trip**, especially after I heard some Deadheads heavily criticizing the film.

Long Strange Trip is a four hour long documentary about the band. The immediate joke that comes to mind is that of course it is. It's like one of their songs, never ending. However, it moves surprisingly quickly and there is no filler. It doesn't get too bogged down in the minutiae. Instead the film focuses on Jerry Garcia and the contradictions of being a hippie and being in a popular band. **Long Strange Trip** doesn't dish too much dirt, but it also doesn't gloss over the drug use, the Hell's Angels or other nefarious aspects of the band. It strikes a good balance.

My favorite part of **Long Strange Trip** is Joe Smith's recollections of signing the band to Warner Bros. That would have been a fun meeting to sit in on. Smith remarks that when Warner finally got around to signing a '60s San Francisco band the Grateful Dead were the only one who hadn't been signed. They were also one of the most popular which should have raised a bunch of red flags. Record company execs always think they are smarter than the artists. I think the Dead may have impressively used that attitude to their advantage. (longstrangetripdoc.com)

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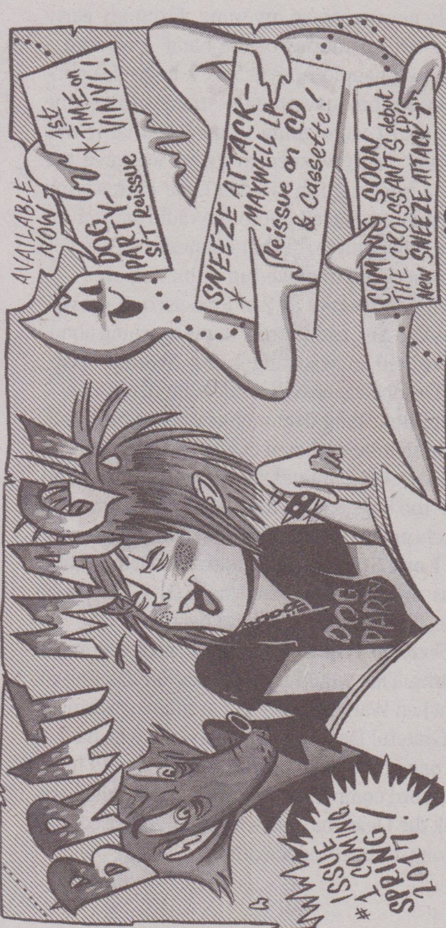
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RECORDS

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(AM) Allan McNaughton
(AU) Andrew Underwood
(BA) Mike Battleaxe
(BP) Ben Paulson
(CK) Carolyn Keddy
(CR) Camylle Reynolds
(CS) Chris Hubbard
(DB) Daniel Becker
(DG) Dan Goetz
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(EW) Eli Wald
(FS) Fred Schrunk
(GA) Grace Ambrose
(GB) Graham Booth
(GH) Greg Harvester
(JD) Joan DeToro
(JR) Jason Ryan
(KK) Kenny Kaos
(LG) Layla Gibbon
(LP) Langford Poh
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MC) Mitch Cardwell
(MM) Marissa Magic
(PA) Pete Avery
(P$) Paul Argent
(RH) Ryan Hertel
(RK) Ramsey Kanaan
(RL) Ray Lujan
(RO) Rotten Ron Ready
(WN) Robert Collins

ABUSEMENTS – "Space Nazis / Florida Man"

Montgomery, Alabama's ABUSEMENTS throw out two straightforward punk songs for their debut single. The first loosely chronicles the history of former Nazi party member Werner Von Braun who later lived in northern Alabama and worked for NASA. It's a little goofy, but it works as a catchy punk song with solid 4/4 drumming. I wish the vocals had a little more *oomph* though. I also wish they called out Von Braun for being a sexist shithead who didn't ever try to do anything about the atrocities he witnessed in concentration camps, but still gets buildings named after him for developing a rocket...but there's only so many words you can fit in a catchy, three minute song. The flip side, "Florida Man" follows along in the same vein of catchy punk, but is basically just a song about the meme of the same name (look it up). People in Alabama (my home state!) love making fun of Florida…or Mississippi. Anyway, here we are in 2017 writing songs about memes. (GH)
(Permanent Lifetime)

ANGRY COUGARS – "Bullshit Authority" EP

Betty Machete and Co. are back with the nine zillionth release I've reviewed by them and I gotta say they finally got it right. Ms. Machete's voice rings with rage and spite, the songs are stripped down of previous self indulgent excesses. You get six short songs of HOOKERS / NASHVILLE PUSSY inspired punk to fuel your rock'n'roll hate train on a Tuesday night. I'm not gonna slap the enclosed band patch on my denim and be a super fan by any means but good work guys. (RO)
(H-Bomb)

THE ANTIKAROSHI – "11 Songs Mostly Written and Played on Wednesday Evenings by a Band Called The Antikaroshi" LP

This is very cool rhythm-driven emotional hardcore. The first song is just straight LUNGFISH. Everything about the vocals says Dan Higgs. The tempo, the bass, just everything says LUNGFISH. While the rest of the record varies and sounds a little more modern, it's still a pretty good starting point. They have their poppier moments, which are very catchy. They have their heavier moments, still mid-tempo in a sort of SOUL SIDE way. They have some vaguely mathy songs (also sort of poppy in a Q AND NOT U way). But yeah, very late '80s and all through the '90s Dischord sort of stuff. The best part is that it manages to sound fresh and new. (PA)
(Exile on Mainstream)

ARNOXDEUBEL / DISPAROL – split EP

Ripping blasts of fast- and / or blastcore from DISPAROL—delivered with a shrill and piercing treble heavy recording. Way heavier powerviolence stomps from ARNOXDEUBEL—blast breaks to tear you away from the foot stomping mosh, excessive samples to remind you how crucial 1997 *actually* was (in case you weren't there). The record is good, but the ARNOXDEUBEL side is legitimately face-melting. This record made my wife and I discuss how crucial these bands must be live. (WN)
(Good Times / Knochen Tapes / Nasty Production)

ARROGANT STATE / SLUTET – split EP

Hey crust freaks, here's your monthly double dose of Swedish D-Beat! ARROGANT STATE lays down some high-energy käng, with plenty of ANTI-CIMEX love to go around. Sure, we've heard it all before, but it shreds nonetheless. SLUTET delivers some plodding and pounding crust, with some understated guitar melody deep in the mix. Deep enough to keep it raw and filthy! If you've got studded denim in your closet, check this out! (BA)
(Phobia)

ARSLE – "Psychopater..." EP

Six sick tracks from these Malmö freaks that are pleasingly free of genre conventions. The vocals are a big element of that, featuring a breathless and unhinged quality that's more CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE than traditional crust. The rhythm section is locked in, but while the bass with its gnarly tone and clean playing is all business, the drumming has a frantic quality that adds to the chaotic vibe of the recording. The guitarist takes plenty of opportunities to shred, which works extremely well with the tunes. The riffing has a distinct Japan-by-way-of-Cleveland quality; there's lots of rock'n'roll buried under all that noize and distortion à la NINE SHOCKS TERROR or INMATES. This EP might not exactly tear you a new one but it's definitely a lot more interesting than the fairly generic black and white collage art would lead you to believe. (AU)
(Adult Crash)

ASHKARA – "In Silence" LP

ASHKARA from Germany play melodramatic post-crust with elements of folk and tribal punk. Hello, GUTS PIE EARSHOT 2017. Doom-tempo intros that rage forward into D-Beat onslaughts. Various vocal pitches ebb and flow without urgency under the neo-crust epic

riffs. I especially like the meter and volley between the vocals. Subtle violin lullabies accompany most tracks creating a calm comfort during the rush of long hardcore expeditions. In other songs, the violin performs as the lead guitar. Painkilling käng changes and machinegun fills from the rhythm and drums keep the music all furious, depressive, and dark. (JR)
(Contraszt! / Rinderherz / Les Nais Aussi)

BAD BOYFRIENDS – "Cut In Line / Dirt Cheap"
Urgent trash channelling from BAD BOYFRIENDS, Arkansas punks of recent vintage. They say what they mean, leaving nothin' for the listener to infer or muse on: 85 seconds on cutting in line, 75 seconds on scrounging for cash. Boom, over. The racket is speedy and basic, not ineffective, but far from explosive. A faint scent of Rip Off Records wafts through the air as this spins, but it could just be gas emitting from the three band-member-butts appearing on the sleeve. (MC)
(Goodbye Boozy)

BAT SIGNAL – "Straight Out Of Midnight" LP
This trio from Greece is very tightly put together. If MILLENCOLIN spent a little more time worshipping the MISFITS (or AFI, if you don't want to give them as much cred), it may have sounded a lot like this. You're getting fast, but not breakneck, pop punk with worn-on-the-sleeve love of the darkness. It's overall pretty solid, but really suffers from one track, which would have made the album a lot better by not existing. "Horse Dick" is a lame, unfocused rant resorting to telling the offenders to suck on a "*nice...big...black...long*" horse dick. Even worse, it's the longest song on the album. They could do better, and this is coming from a reviewer who still thinks NOFX is hilarious. (RH)
(Cannonball / Keep It A Secret / LRS / Walk The Line / World's Appreciated Kitsch)

BEYOND PEACE – "Old Crop" EP
Straight up, BEYOND PEACE is the best North American hardcore band I saw live in 2017. I realize that it's only November as I type this, but I cannot really imagine that's gonna change in the next six weeks. This record rips. Hard. Check the riffs in "Big Man" and then flip to the reimagined (and improved) SOIA intro to "Wearing Thin" that starts the B side...it's simply untouchable shit. But here's the thing: it's *way* better live. Yeah, you heard me—one of the best records I have heard this year is from a band who still hasn't even managed to capture their full potential on wax, Think about that. (WN)
(Hard Art)

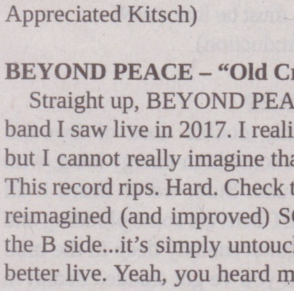
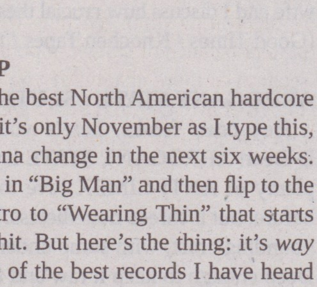
BIG HUGE – "Cruel World" LP
This is a funny one. At times it's very poppy. Other times it's got a quirky, new wave feel. Other times it's very '70s rock. What doesn't change is the energy, which is frenetic, bordering on nervousness. That is there from start to finish. The guitars at time remind me of X, AC/DC, DEVO, and / or BOSTON. That might not sound like the most enjoyable combination in the world, but it works pretty well for these guys. The female vocals feel like they've been purposely recorded with some distortion. Good stuff. The sound and the band photo on the insert might lead you to believe differently, but these guys are from NYC. (KK)
(Erste Theke Tonträger)

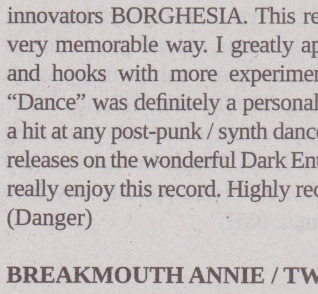
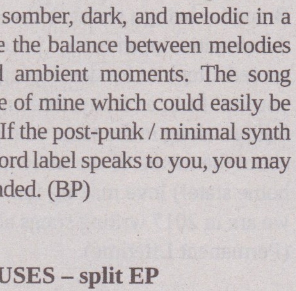
BIG MESS – "Try to Enjoy It" LP
Realy love the CURE? Then you might like this. Or, you can just listen to the CURE instead. (CR)
(Indisciplinarian)

BLANK WHEN ZERO – "Einerseits..." LP
Earnest, multi-vocalist, and sung melodic hardcore that makes me think of fresh-faced college students on their way to all kinds of firsts in the big city. I think the palpable passion and lack of saccharine or steroids in the production go a long way in terms of giving this record redeeming value when almost nothing that sounds even remotely similar does. I'd say it's a little less, say, STRIKE ANYWHERE, and more bouncing around in a German squat. I even kinda like the acoustic guitar parts. (DG)
(Keep It A Secret)

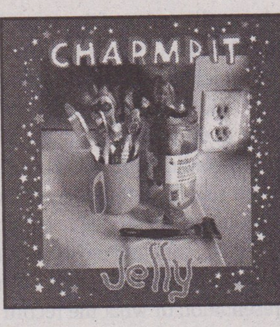
BORIS DZANECK – "In His Own Words" LP
BORIS DZANECK was a Dutch post-punk / minimal synth group that existed for a majority of the '80s and this LP is a reissue of their first cassette which was originally released in 1983. Members of BORIS DZANECK were also previously in the Dutch DISORDER. While some of the songs are more upbeat and overlaid with memorable guitar melodies, others take a much more stripped-down approach which rely on sparse synth leads and repetitive rhythms via drum machines. In the more somber and melodic moments, bands such as DECIMA VICTIMA, COLDREAMS and the WAKE come to mind. In the other more synth-heavy and experimental moments, they are reminiscent of GRAUZONE and Yugoslavian innovators BORGHESIA. This record is somber, dark, and melodic in a very memorable way. I greatly appreciate the balance between melodies and hooks with more experimental and ambient moments. The song "Dance" was definitely a personal favorite of mine which could easily be a hit at any post-punk / synth dance night. If the post-punk / minimal synth releases on the wonderful Dark Entries record label speaks to you, you may really enjoy this record. Highly recommended. (BP)
(Danger)

BREAKMOUTH ANNIE / TWO HOUSES – split EP
BREAKMOUTH ANNIE give us two fun punk songs for dudes with beards that are hugging and drinking beers with each other, complete with those moments where the same dudes sing full volume into each other's mouths while spitting. We've all seen that a millions times, right? This is that. If you like that, carry mints and check this out. TWO HOUSES gives us some well-intended but amateurish poetry set to some well-intended but all over the place music, and their two songs really can't compete with the stronger contributions from their splitmates. A quick search did allow me to find a lot more of their music that is actually quite good, but unfortunately, I'm not reviewing that. (RH)
(Do What?)

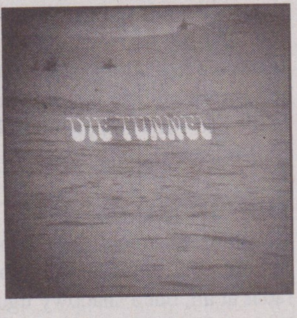



BURNING SPRING
CUDDLEFISH



marionette



BRÜNNER TODESMARSCH – "Legální Lágry, Ilegální Lidé" 10"

This is some solid fastcore out of the Czech Republic that is raw, yet on point! These guys might not do the D-Beat all the time, but they pull as much from käng as they do from early US thrash. It's kind of like if DRI were from Europe. If you're looking for the circle pit of your dreams, then check this out! (BA)
(Phobia)

BURNING SPRING / CUDDLEFISH – split EP

This is a split 7" by Niagara Falls' BURNING SPRING and Athens, GA's CUDDLEFISH. BURNING SPRING contributes two emo-influenced pop-punk tracks. You might enjoy it if you're into that kind of music. CUDDLEFISH delivers three mid-tempo melodic punk songs with nice throaty vocals that sound like the guys from LAWRENCE ARMS and / or KID DYNAMITE, but the recording is pretty raw and not as "clean" as those bands which is a good thing in my opinion. (DB)
(Debt Offensive)

CHARMPIT – "Jelly" EP

Saccharine queer femme punk. Reminds me of a pinker, sparklier DANSKINSEY4. Even with fluffy lyrics like *"Skinny dipping in Danube / You're my Tsar my boodadoo,"* it's not too soft. Has an edge, almost uncomfortably so that sounds authentic and heartfelt. (CR)
(Keroleen)

CHOKE CHAINS – "Trace Amounts" EP

If you like your rock'n'roll guttural and dirty, you'll probably enjoy this. This EP has eight tracks of revved-up vocals ranging from manic ramblings to screams and guitar-drenched mid-tempo garage rock that is both catchy and anxiety-inducing. The topics of the songs include serial killers, losers, and sins. CHOKE CHAINS ends this EP with a nice cover of the NERVOUS EATERS' song "Degenerate." (DB)
(Heel Turn)

THE CREEPING TERRORS – "Evil Witch Bitch" LP

Prejudging this record from the awful cutesy Vampira meets Samhain artwork on the cover and condemning it to the heap of "spooky" garage rockabilly vampire assholes would be a mistake as this is a slightly more interesting listen. Yes, there is some of that crap here, but the stripped down sound of two women and a drum machine gives this a raw edge over the endless DAMNED and HORROR POPS clones clogging up the graveyard. The venom spewing from songs like "Intercourse With The Dead" and "Impaling Hipsters" combined with the strong feminist lyrics on songs like "A Dick With An Itch" are refreshing in a world of two tone bangs and skeleton gloves. Combine the female fury of QUEEN COBRA and BIKINI KILL with SAMHAIN and PENIS FLYTRAP and it might ooze out something like this. (RO)
(self-released)

CUSTODY – "Blistered Soul / Whatever We Decide"

When I think of Finnish punk this type of band isn't really first that comes to mind. CUSTODY plays melodic and emotional pop punk. This band really manages to capture both positive and melancholy vibes through their music on this record. I enjoyed Side B a little better than Side A. Comes on yellow vinyl with cool artwork. Worth checking out. (DB)
(Different Kitchen / Keep It A Secret / Pop Kid / Water Slide)

DENDÖ MARIONETTE – "傀儡電伝" LP

Damn! Osaka, Japan's DENDÖ MARIONETTE released one flexi back in 1981 (currently on Discogs for $199) and then called it quits as far as the general public is concerned. This LP collects that flexi along with an unreleased EP recorded in 1982 (!!) that offers up a brief snapshot of this band's impact on synth-punk, proto-darkwave and industrial music. "Frozen Edge" from the flexi sounds like it was remastered straight off that release or from a warbly tape but it only adds to the anxious, nervous energy of this warped synth-punk banger. The sound quality only improves after that, showcasing the band's love of claustrophobic soundscapes and moody, almost goth new wave. It's a shame that the other EP was never released because it's flawless. It leads off with a slower piece before launching into the pounding "Celebration of Night," which would have any room of sad goths dancing relentlessly to the searing drum machine within seconds. This whole record has a perfect balance of slower, moodier cuts that only make the faster songs seem even more chaotic. If you're a fan of early industrial, CHROME, TUXEDOMOON, and SUICIDE, you'll want to track this one down. It's remastered from the original tapes and sounds starkly excellent. (GH)
(Bitter Lake / Mouse)

DIANETICS – "Book Learned" EP

I'm not against bands pressing their demos to vinyl if the tracks are *tracks*, and this record that collects DIANETICS' demo on Side A and an almost seven-minute space jam on Side B are more than worth existing as a 7". They're from Chicago, and lend their own unique sound to the musical wave that's been coming out of the city, along with NWI and beyond over the last few years. Imagine CCTV and LEMONADE thrown together in a psychedelic haze and played at 78 RPM, and you'd be partway there. It legitimately sounds like it's on the wrong speed, and it's not always obvious that there's guitar in addition to the keyboards, but all of this is in the best way possible. The keyboards and sassy, put-through-a-flanger vocals offer an interesting contrast to the more raging drums, which play a big part in distinguished all these songs from each other, in particular the aforementioned final song. This rules. (DG)
(Weirdly)

DIE TUNNEL – EP

When I saw this was mastered by Daniel Husayn I was immediately curious. Dude does great work. This may be a weird comparison it's almost like something from San Pedro met something sassy from Copenhagen. It's a weird hybrid of MINUTEMEN style moments—angular post-punk with clean guitar that will also segue into some more straightforward parts but with off-kilter leads throughout that keep it interesting. Somewhere between the MINUTEMEN and ICEAGE with a sprinkling of UK DIY post-punk and even a bit of MASSHYSTHERI thrown in for good measure. The vocals are cool and kinda shouty,

almost like this came out on Ebullition but not quite that shouty. It's cool, but not necessarily ballin' enough to transcend its influences to become a gamed-up juggernaut in it's own right. Overall, the EP is a solid work of craftsmanship and a nice introduction to the band. None of it's bad—it's completely solid throughout. (P$)
(self-released)

THE DINOSAURS – LP

Callin' all rock'n'roll morons! Unearthed vintage scuzz from St.Louis '78, now wax-ified for us goons. These 'Saurs weren't on my radar at all, but a shadowy figure messaged me 'bout 'em some weeks back and laid the digital dirt at my feet. I soon perused their wares and was knocked out cold by 'em. My initial assessment was "stupid LOU REED," which I then augmented to the friendlier "doper pop." Both high compliments! All told, this lot boasts a sound in line with your favorite proto-punk, having all those intangibles, but only made during the boom. Had these men not had families to support & disappoint in '78, maybe they'd be VOIDOIDS or something. Instead, they're a barroom GIZMOS or MODERN LOVERS. Not too shabby, dawggies! Holdin' the collection in my mits, I can see that this is exactly my kinda thing: outsider zonked buttheads making noize with attitude and without even the slightest concern for talent or approval. Real rock, fun & loose! Scarf ASAP and bask in their glow! Go Dinos! (MC)
(BDR / Big Muddy)

DIRTY & HIS FISTS – "Heretics" EP

Killer production on this debut EP from Los Angeles based DIRTY & HIS FISTS. Reminds me of '90s L.A. back when punk was punk again, with everybody anticipating the next release from LE SHOK and the STITCHES. This EP has a similar over-the-top, in-your-face punk quality, but somehow they've cleverly channeled GEZA X / Dangerhouse production à la DEADBEATS or WEIRDOS. Real infectious stuff. Great EP, and it's worth tracking down their demo while you're at it. (GB)
(Feel It)

DOTS – LP

Weird punk from Italy. You don't see many one-sided LPs. But they sure managed to pack in the titles on that one side with nine tracks! Wonder if this was a money saving scheme, or they just wanted to make sure we knew they were weird. Well they are weird, funky punks! Great production, as with most funky punk, hard to draw comparisons, but they promise they listened to a lot of BLACK RANDY & THE METROSQUAD. Cool diverse sounds! (GB)
(Depression House)

EEL – "Night Parade of 100 Demons" 12"

With every recording, EEL improve on an already solid body of work. This latest opus is easily the best yet, capturing both the chaos of their live incarnation and their strong songwriting. The recording is a big part of this, burying the vocal in the mix until it's more another instrument than a lead element while the loud, bright leads and riffs occupy the forefront of the recording. While still rooted in noizy hardcore, the influence of the more metallic wing of Japanese hardcore (think ZOUO or the enigmatic SYUDAN JISATSU (who are not actually Japanese, but your milage may vary)) is definitely in evidence, particularly in standout tracks like "Devil Only," "Gamble With Life," and "Carry On Shambling Ghoul." The band is at their absolute apex when marching through these more mid-tempo metallic numbers, with their crazed vocals lurking under head-banging riffs held to punk account by the machine-like 1-2 drumming. The moments of proper noise collage add to the the dark, disorienting feel of the record and never outstay their welcome. The dank cover art by long-running Japanese punk artist Kazuhiro offers up an excellent visual representation of what the record offers. Excellent. (AU)
(Beach Impediment)

ENGINE SUMMER – "Trophy Kids" LP

I always enjoy handwritten notes included with review records. It's a nice touch. This one states the band's influences are "Wire's *Pink Flag*, John Fogerty's wardrobe and the soundtrack to *Boogie Nights*." ENDLESS SUMMER is from Chicago and employs a bunch of different musical styles. The songs sound very '80s indie rock. The rhythms can be stilted and jerky in a pleasant way. Occasionally they elongate in a groovy manner. The vocals have a quirkiness that reminds me of DAVID BYRNE. This album is very enjoyable. (CK)
(self-released)

ENTRY – "No Relief" EP

This one is some well-crafted crusty D-Beat out of Los Angeles. This band apparently features members of some giant post-hardcore band that I've never heard of, which is to their benefit because I'd probably hate it. *This* on the other hand is pretty sick! Tight thrashing along the lines of FINAL CONFLICT, with subtle guitar atmospherics that add a nice touch! Definitely worth a spin! (BA)
(Dune Altar)

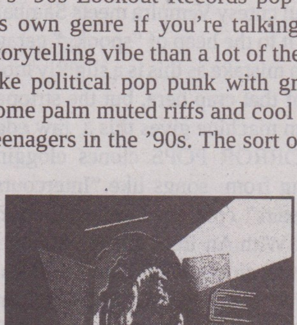
ERODERS – "Doctor Says" EP

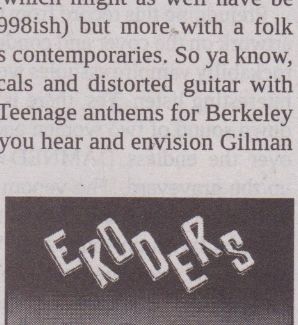
Oh my god are they starting the record with a NIRVANA cover?! Oh, nevermind. Seriously though, the opening riff *is* "About A Girl." These fresh fellows are from Detroit and draw power from the rich rock'n'roll and proto-punk history of their home state. What, no bassist? That's okay, the guitars are rich and bluesy and fill out the low end enough. No song particularly gets my attention but the record sounds really great and is a groovy listen all the way through. #nonjapanesereleaseswithobistrips (MA)
(It's Trash)

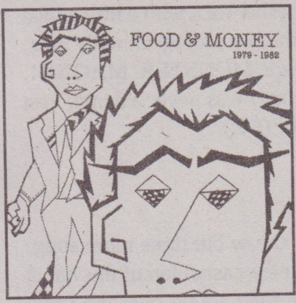
FIFTEEN – "Liberation" EP

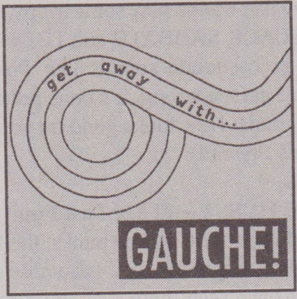
This is the rerelease of FIFTEEN's 1990 Lookout Records EP. It's '90s Lookout Records pop punk (which might as well have be its own genre if you're talking pre-1998ish) but more with a folk storytelling vibe than a lot of the band's contemporaries. So ya know, like political pop punk with gruff vocals and distorted guitar with some palm muted riffs and cool leads. Teenage anthems for Berkeley teenagers in the '90s. The sort of stuff you hear and envision Gilman

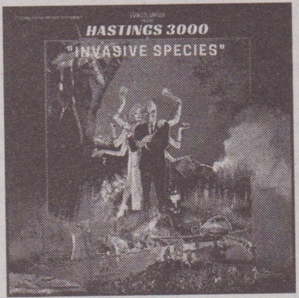
ENGINE SUMMER
TROPHY KIDS








get away with...
GAUCHE!



being a Mecca for when you're a kid. Sure the band should have stopped in 1995, sure their Sub City output can be painful to listen to...but this is before all of that. This is a fun jumping off point to get acquainted with and perhaps exactly what you want to spin after reading the *Cometbus Omnibus*. (P$)
(Dead Broke)

FIFTEEN – "Swain's First Bike Ride" LP

This is killer. Since Jeff Ott's earlier stuff was so important to me growing up, I always thought of FIFTEEN as a second rate CRIMPSHRINE. This is most likely up for discussion, as the things I liked might not count for squat with the rest of y'all. Although Jeff's voice and songs are as solid as ever here, gone is a lot of the sloppiness, gone was the gutter, gone was a lot of the aggression. FIFTEEN, despite still not ever singing in tune with each other, was way tighter, a lot more polished, the guitar was better played and was played a lot cleaner, and Jeff actually attempts to croon...a lot. While it doesn't always hit the spot, when it does, it totally kills. This being in my mailbox righted a decades old wrong, though. When I ordered this from Lookout when it came out, I got the 7" instead. Despite several letters, the label never sent me what I paid for and I vowed to never buy a copy, so fuck you, whoever ran the Lookout mailorder back then. If for some reason you haven't heard this band and already formulated a firm opinion, I'll just say this is incredibly dirty as hell pop punk at it's finest. I personally like more punk in my pop punk, but this is unquestionably vital to...fuck, everyone really. Despite the vocals being almost creepily spiritual, with several mentions of god, both on record and in the packaging, these first recordings are absolutely undeniable. Well, most of them, anyway. There's a few funky jams that can take a hike as far as I'm concerned. No, seriously, if you haven't heard this, you should just put your pants on right now and go buy it. Just kidding, I know you'd never buy anything you've never heard before, so just go play it for free on the computer. (DZ)
(Dead Broke)

FLESH WORLD – "Into The Shroud" LP

I don't want to call this post-punk because, while this band may sonically fit tidily into that subgenre, there's a grown-up NPR style depth (not hating, I like NPR) that's not specific to a genre...plus this isn't punk anymore (even if it's made by punks). It's Mod music with goth vibes. *Which is not a bad thing.* Punks not making punk things is wonderful. I spent more money on DEE DEE KING'S rap record than I have on any RAMONES record. I listen to it more than any RAMONES record. With all that said, you probably know this band. If you don't go watch the video for "Sturdy Swiss Hiker" and get pumped and put it on a mixtape. Jess played and sang in BRILLIANT COLORS and this pulls the dream-pop songwriting style from that band but with leads from a dude used to playing hardcore. Which, if you're reading this probably increases the chances of you liking it. Here's the thing though...with the gothic vibes on this one I'm almost expecting some disco style drumming but Sam keeps it tom heavy and not hi-hat heavy. Dream-pop made by punks. Something to spin to while you read *Rip It Up and Start Again*. (P$)
(Dark Entries)

FOOD & MONEY – "1979–1982" LP

How strange. I'm from Illinois, and like to think I have a pretty encyclopedic knowledge of IL punk rock. This group FOOD & MONEY...a friend actually gave me their super obscure *Economic Bullies* EP with a cool silkscreened sleeve out of the blue just about six months ago, I didn't even realize they were from Illinois. I had no idea. Like I said, their EP is super obscure, probably because it's more new wavey than in your face punk, though "No Need For Sox" from the EP is pretty punky. The other 1.5 sides covers the rest of their catalog, Side A is studio material more along the lines of the EP, always quirky, skirting the boundaries between art / pop / punk and new wave. Side B is from a later live cassette with a few punky hits mixed with some more quirky-bar band sounds. Alona's Dream is really killing it with their steady stream of forgotten Illinois obscurities, so I guess I'd better make some shelf space cuz who knows what's next!? (GB)
(Alona's Dream)

GAUCHE "Get Away With..." LP

Finally on LP! This came out a few years ago on cassette, featuring the dynamic skills of one of my favorite girlpuk archivist geniuses Mary Jane Regalado along with Daniele from PRIESTS, how could it not instantly of grabbed my attention and heart?! A truly genius radical sound for punks that get off on fragmented guitars and shards of rhythm, for whom the existence of Y-PANTS and DRESS UP AS NATIVES are reasons for living. This record is the best! Every song is a hit that makes you think and dance simultaneously. Each song is a burst of joy, makes me think of being a teenager skating through abandoned streets listening to tapes of the 45s I picked up at the Notting Hill Record Exchange that week… Radical insurrectionist pop music for readers and dancers. A lot of post-punk sounds can feel studious and austere but GAUCHE are smart and delirious: Maximum Joy! Like that video of the B-52s in 1978 with added Leeds 1978 sound? While I love the cassette format, having these sounds on record feels more permanent and important! Thanks to Danger Records for doing this, GAUCHE really fits in with that label's art girl destruction sound! I hope this reissue means that GAUCHE is gonna do more soon? What a group! (LG)
(Danger)

GENERACIÓN BASURA – EP

You gotta love a band named Trash Generation. Well, I do anyway and this is some straight-up classic-style Spanish punk that's up there with the faster ESKORBUTO songs or rougher GUERRILLA URBANA tracks but not as thrash as RIP. Catchy hooks and lots of heart. A real winner here. (RO)
(Andalucia Über Alles / Angry & Hungry / Colilla / DIT/Fem-Ho Juntes / Muerte A Tipo / Torrente De Ideas)

GLORIOUS? – "Neverending Butchery" EP

First, and possibly most important in terms of understanding this band, guitarist / vocalist Petter does a fucking amazing Kawakami impression that nails the monotone yet furious approach that characterized the DISCLOSE sound. Indeed, the band owes a ton to DISCLOSE circa the late '90s / early '00s. Not wreathed in noize, but pounding out mega-heavy DISCHARGE worship that leans heavily on precise stop-starts in

the songwriting and a huge attacking sound. There are no better bands to emulate in the style if you want to challenge yourself to constantly grow and push the boundaries of D-beat and GLORIOUS? acquit themselves wonderfully on this EP, ending with the blazing "All In the Name of Progress" that could easily be mistaken for an outtake from the *Tragedy* or *4 Track EP* DISCLOSE sessions. (AU)
(Adult Crash)

GSP – 12"
Ten killer tracks from three influential women that rise above the members' punk pedigrees. And that's really saying something because their pedigrees include such highly esteemed acts as BIKINI KILL, SKINNED TEEN, MOZART, FRUMPIES, and a billion more great bands. Dueling, angular, and noisy single-note guitar lines and often jubilant drumming provide the backing for the trio's incredible gang vocals, which sound like outcries from a universe where your local high school girl gang really *did* run the town. No trends here—this record feels like it exists in its own world, separate from the LUMPY and CONEHEADS clones that run so rampant in today's DIY scene. Exuberant, defiant, essential. (JD)
(Thrilling Living)

HARD-ONS / NOT SCIENTISTS – split EP
The early HARD-ONS material and the live show that I witnessed in the '80s are etched fondly in my memory as inspirational but the horrible show I saw them play more recently and the crap metal they've been writing such as the song here are working well to tarnish the golden pedestal I once plopped them on. Picture the HARD-ONS playing new MINISTRY and you can figure out how the turd "Road Sweeper" on this record sounds. NOT SCIENTISTS play the French version of wimpy college rock to complete this miserable experience. Skip it. (RO)
(Shield)

HASTINGS 3000 – "Invasive Species" LP
This is the second album from this Minneapolis band / performance artist. It was recorded all over the world during the last few years. The music is a meshing of garage rock and dance music, with acoustic guitars backed by electronic beats. On some songs the two styles don't mix. On others they do. One song "Torn Apart (Streets Are Calling)" resembles a reworking of Pulp's "Common People". (CK)
(Evolute United)

HORROR SECTION – "Season of the Witch" EP
Cool 7" with four songs by Missouri's HORROR SECTION, a band dedicated to writing pop punk songs about horror movies. The songs are catchy and all of them are good, but I think my favorite is probably the first track "They're Coming" because of it's upbeat drumming and short guitar solos that remind me of bands like the LILLINGTONS and SCREECHING WEASEL. (DB)
(Eccentric Pop / Ghost Party)

HOUND – "Born Under 76" LP
I know where these dudes are coming from and I get it, really I do. They just wanna play some trippy, badass hesher rock with a little pinch of BLACK SABBATH and THIN LIZZY thrown around all willy nilly, but it just kinda sounds like *Powertrip*-era MONSTER MAGNET. Don't get me wrong, it's done pretty well, but I was never a denim vest rock dude. Hey, looks good on you, though! (DZ)
(Let's Pretend)

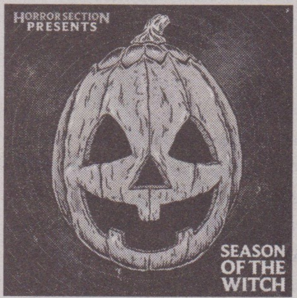
THE HUSSY – "I See Just Fine" EP
Ultra-prolific garage punks, the HUSSY throw out three more songs for your stupid ass ears. I can only call myself a casual fan of this band, but I have seen them tighten up and refine their sound over the years and "I See Just Fine" might be the catchiest, most memorable song I've ever heard from them. Anchored by a solid hook, the band builds a beautifully melodic song around it until the whole thing collides into a synth wall at the end. It's so good that the flip side almost feels like an afterthought, but those songs are great in their own right as well. Those two songs are also catchy and raw, demanding your attention, but my thoughts keep coming back to Side A. It's so good! (GH)
(Big Neck)

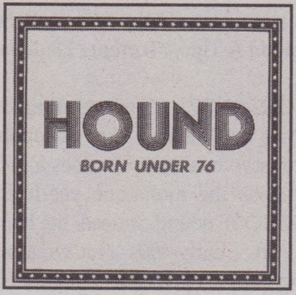
JONNY KURT VS HANK THE TANK – "AWO Maria" LP
This is straightforward surf music from Germany. No frills. There is plenty of reverb on the guitar and the drummer sounds like he's playing a box. Of course, drummers should always bang on whatever they have. They manage to jam a lot of songs on this LP. There is an odd non-instrumental song called "Techno DJ" that has a peculiar reggae style. (CK)
(Phantom)

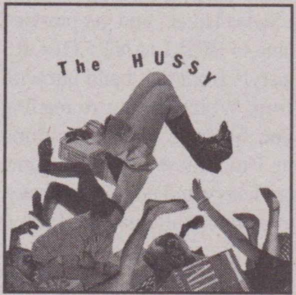
JULIETTE SEIZURE AND THE TREMOR DOLLS – "Seizure Salad" LP
Kitchy, dumb Bubblegum garage pop, which I love when it's done right. This record sorta feels like NIKKI AND THE CORVETTES but with a shitter recording, distorted vocals, and guitar volume turned to 10. It's all bleeding ears and sugar coated harmonies. Not bad. (CR)
(Dirtyflair)

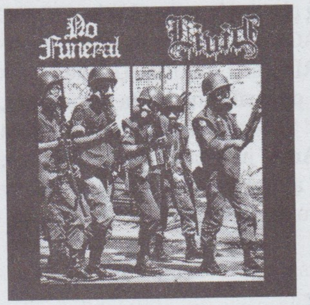
KNIFER – "Don't Say My Name / Strugglin'"
I'm a pretty big fan of Aussie punkish hard rock from the past and present but the offering here from this new Brisbane band is dull dull dull. "Don't Say My Name" is definitely the better song, with a MOTÖRHEADish boogie guitar and vocals akin to fellow Aussies the SKIDS or the metal band HEAVY SENTENCE but this really lays light in the jock never really going anywhere or packing much of a punch,. "Strugglin'" is fucking unlistenable, like the worst FM radio garbage or a bad karaoke party you've been trapped at long after the warm keg of MGD is drained. There's definitely some promise here but I'm not seeing it this time around. (RO)
(Rogues Realm)

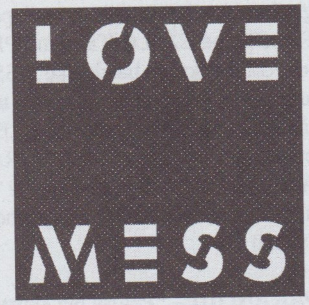
KYNNET – "Kaipaa Esittelyja" LP
Inoffensive fuzz-pop from Finland. Kynnet take several pages from virtually every MARKED MEN off-shoot and also-ran to make up their

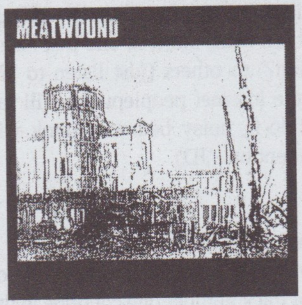












EP MK1
NEO NEOS
THE HAMMER OF CIVILIZATION

sound, which is often speedy, itchy and sugary. Their finest moments are more measured and homemade ("Jalokahvihuulet" stands out with it's near-12-string chime), coming off almost folky were it not for the general helium sounds of thangs. Fans of the aforementioned mode could theoretically have new favorite Finns here. (MC)
(Soit Se Silti)

LES LULLIES – "Don't Look Twice" EP

That Research & Development Dept. over at Slovenly really knows how to generate Euro apeshit rock'n'roll, lemme tell ya. LES LULLIES, from somewhere over there, is the latest and greatest, checking in here with four shards too sharp for garage yet not spiky enough for punk. It's all careening stuff, the concept of HENRY FIAT fronting THE MAKERS shocked into being, all delivered with a wink / nod tribute to ye ol' DOWNLINER'S SECT for good measure. Pukin' good fun. (MC)
(Slovenly)

LIVID / NO FUNERAL – Split LP

A catastrophically depressive split from both bands. NO FUNERAL rumble in with an ominous bell-tolling track with loose bass like the cords that tie up a ghost ship. The guitar tones are barrier-rattling and the drums are filled with echo and disdain. Vocals are rough and snarling. 2,000 leagues deeper than GRAVE AT SEA but bringing back that vibe for me, but even more hypnotic and miserable. Track two picks up the pace with some classic crusty licks. This aligns with the bitter and loathsome tape I reviewed of theirs a few months ago. LIVID are more atmospheric—a desolate sonic landscape; the aftermath of the war on Side A. The ASUNDER, side if you will. They sound hollow, melancholy, and more melodic while also being more soothing. Their side is a long drawn out song, without making me impatient for changes from this genre. The vocals have a gothic vibe, or like contemporaries ALARIC. Actually, their split with ATRIARCH is another good split comparison to this LP too. Grab this if sorrowful doom metal is your thing. It's what you want on both sides and the production is ace. (JR)
(Live Fast Die)

LOVE MESS – EP

LOVE MESS hails from Auckland, New Zealand and plays dark, heavy hardcore. This EP is fast at moments and other moments are much heavier and mid-tempo. In the more mid-tempo, rockin' moments, it is headed in a more of a stoner-rock direction where the darker and more discordant parts are reminiscent of CURSED and BLOODLET. This record reminded me of the late '90s and early 2000s, but it didn't really keep my attention. (BP)
(Press Gang)

MEATWOUND – "Trash Apparatus" EP

Bass-heavy, percussive hardcore meltdown out of Florida. These guys kind of sound like HIGH ON FIRE, playing MAN IS THE BASTARD. They also kind of sound like some overgrown Neanderthal creeping around after eating the wrong kind of fungus. If you're looking to get weird, then look no further. (BA)
(Dead Tank / Financial Ruin)

MIDWIVES – "No" LP

Another band name for that list that the *Portland Mercury* started. Can all-male bands stop giving their bands these kinds of names? Um, MIDWIVES jumps around a bit stylistically, but you get some diet JESUS LIZARD, some OK but nondescript dissonant hardcore, some more fast and straightforward but ultimately milquetoast hardcore, and "Charlie's Room" throws in some FUGAZI influence, all wrapped together by frustrated/subdued and kinda angsty vocals. (DG)
(Holy Family Players Theatre)

MR. WRONG – "Babes in Boyland" LP

Portland, Oregon's MR. WRONG shines brightly here on their first LP, harnessing the raw energy and enthusiasm of their live show in a studio setting. Sometimes, they are straightforward and catchy in a garage punk vein while encouraging you to ditch your boyfriend and relaying the boredom of seeing too many boy bands. Other times they change up the tempos, recalling the post-punk of KLEENEX, WIRE, and RAINCOATS, but they sing about internet trolls, self-hate, and trying to do anything in the current nightmare world that totally consumes our reality . This a strong debut for a first LP, but I think their true strength still lies in their live show. Still, if they're not coming to your town, they did a really great job of putting a lot of that strength in these vinyl grooves. Get this. (GH)
(Water Wing)

NEBENWIRKUNG – "Gewalt" EP

Are you an '80s Euro hardcore fan? Here we have a reissue of the first EP from Bremen's NEBENWIRKUNG (which means Side Effect) from '84. This one seems a bit more elusive than many other '80s hardcore records from Germany, but soundwise could fit in with the Pogar bands like MALINHEADS, VELLOCET, and VORKRIEGSJUGEND. Six fast, raucous and punchy songs that are more chaotic than memorable. All original cover and insert art are faithfully reproduced with bonus pixelated current logo art and a cute current photo of the band. *Prost*! (MA)
(Threat From the Past)

NEBENWIRKUNG – "Viel Zeit Bleibt Uns Nicht Mehr" EP

To this hesher's ears, the second EP from this Bremen, Germany hardcore unit, originally released in 1987, is a major upgrade from their previous efforts. NEBENWIRKUNG stretch out a bit more than they do on their earlier releases, occasionally aping metalpunk stylings similar to groups like SACRILEGE. The A-side is the real winner here: a three minute burst of sound that'll have you smashing beer bottles over your own goddamn head. (JD)
(Threat From The Past)

NEO NEOS – "The Hammer Of Civilization" EP

Four tracks of bouncy, sardonic home-recorded DIY punk from one Connie Voltaire, who is extremely self-aware of the style that NEO NEOS and other New Wave-inspired bands copy from. Whether or not you'll enjoy this depends on if you like bands influenced by CONEHEADS bands (or as Voltaire sarcastically refers to them on another release, "the

Boneheads"). That's not to say that this is a direct rip-off at all—Voltaire definitely has a distinct snide style of his own, but it is one that seems driven as a reaction (or is it retaliation?) to others (just listen to "No Dancing" on this record). All in all, the internet peoplepunks will find plenty to enjoy here—four tracks of lo-fi, noisy bedroom punk with enough variety to maintain anyone's attention. (JD)
(It's Trash)

NERVOUS TWITCH – "That Weird Guy" EP
There's no denying that this is super catchy. It starts off with an almost DEAD MILKMEN riff and the lyrics of track number one continue in that same spirit. There's a certain awkwardness to it that doesn't come across as accidental. The EP has three songs and all three are quite different. They have in common that they're all female-fronted, all catchy and all completely worthwhile. This is worth looking for. Really good stuff. (KK)
(Punk Fox)

NO MEN – "Cut" EP
Dark, gloomy, simplistic melodies with Karen O like vocals. On the tip of CROOKED BANGS, minus French lyrics, and with crunchier guitar. Two thumbs up. (CR)
(Let's Pretend)

NO NEGATIVE – "Cellophane / Stickin' It to the Man Again"
Confident and sorta psychedelic punk from Montreal that has a bit of a dark vibe to it and is reminiscent at times of the NEW FLESH, at least on Side A. Heavily effected guitars and almost-buried vocals gives it a little bit of mystery. Side B mostly sticks to building on a riff while a bass clarinet freaks out over it. I'm not getting a lot from it, but I can't deny that it's calculated and good. (GH)
(Swollen City)

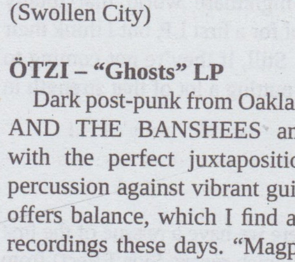
ÖTZI – "Ghosts" LP
Dark post-punk from Oakland, ÖTZI is a mix of early SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES and ominous Euro punk CHROMA with the perfect juxtaposition of shadow-like synth and stark percussion against vibrant guitar and distorted vocals. The contrast offers balance, which I find a rarity with many modern post-punk recordings these days. "Magpie", "Ghosts" and "Charms" are my favorites on this LP. Great LP and even better live set. Catch them if you can. (CR)
(LastHour / Near Dark)

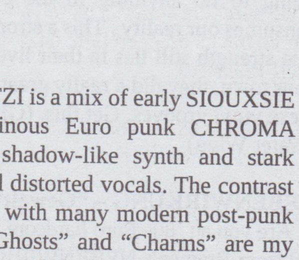
PARANOID – "Cover of the Month: A Hardcore Punk and Heavy Mental Tribute Compilation" LP
In 2015, Swedish raw punx PARANOID committed to recording and releasing a cover a month for the entirety of the year. This LP, naturally, collects the results of that project. First of all, this is a fucking swank package by any standard! Heavy-duty tip-on sleeve, a huge poster and extensive liner notes are all included. Indeed, the liner notes might be the best thing about the album, with very detailed accounts of what each song means to the band and its individual members. The song selection is gloriously unpredictable as well, pairing classics from bands like CELTIC FROST, the EXPLOITED and PENTAGRAM with covers of more-or-less contemporary bands like PISSCHRIST and ACURSED. The covers are mostly more-or-less faithful to the originals, though in some cases, like the crusted-up take on STREBERS' "2 Skott" and the dumbed-down punked-up assault on SEPULTURA's "Arise" have quite a bit of character. As the end of the day, this may be "just" a covers album, but it's definitely in the upper echelon of quality when it comes to such things. (AU)
(Svart)

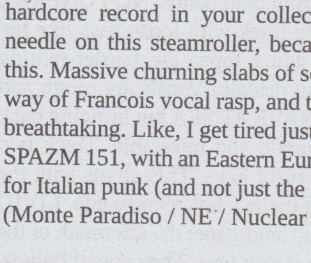
PARANOID – "Praise No Deity" EP
D-Beat fans of the world will froth at the mouth at the fury captured here. PARANOID mastered the form at the get-go, and this EP is further proof of their total understanding (and devastation) of the D-Beat genre. It's fucking killer from the first moment to the very last. My main criticism is not related to the music at all—the music is extremely enjoyable—but rather that PARANOID, a Swedish band, totally depends on the Japanese language for the majority of its aesthetic, even going so far as to regularly spell their name, song titles, and other band-related material in the Japanese alphabet. Why? To this reviewer it feels exploitative. We get it—Japanese hardcore is seen by many as an apex of intense punk...but so is Swedish punk! (JD)
(Konton Crasher / The Sign)

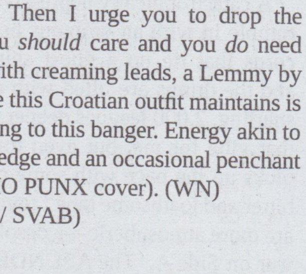
PASMATERS – "You Can't Stop This" LP
If you wonder whether or not the world needs another European band with '80s roots flying the hardcore flag at full mast; if you wonder whether or not you care about a band who started in '84 but then broke up, reformed, and didn't release a record (or compact disc) until 2002; if you wonder whether or not you even need another meat and potatoes hardcore record in your collection...? Then I urge you to drop the needle on this steamroller, because you *should* care and you *do* need this. Massive churning slabs of sound with creaming leads, a Lemmy by way of Francois vocal rasp, and the pace this Croatian outfit maintains is breathtaking. Like, I get tired just listening to this banger. Energy akin to SPAZM 151, with an Eastern European edge and an occasional penchant for Italian punk (and not just the PEGGIO PUNX cover). (WN)
(Monte Paradiso / NE / Nuclear Chaos / SVAB)

PATSY – "LA Women" LP
Perfect! UKDIY directional shamble meets ice cool LA 1978 punk dreams. Candice has the voice to communicate to all other worlds what punk is and then there is that perfect guitar sound, like listening to "Ghost on the Highway" on 45…I only like drums that sound either murderous or collapsing and this is both at once. Oh the allure of PATSY, what a dream, what a group. If you only want to listen to KLEENEX and RED CROSS at this juncture of the end of the world, if you want to hear the sound of sneering delight, of true joyous insurrection this 12" is the eloquent yet snotty answer to all your problems. The way "Society Ape" switches to "Nazi's Are So Plain" is the stuff dreams are made of. An actual perfect 12" and an easy contender for record of the year. Hardcore. (LG)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

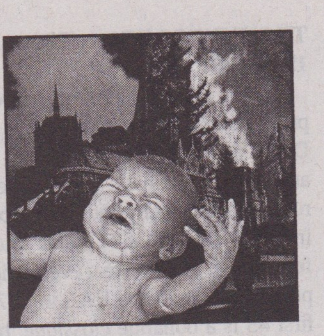








Please Stop!
Power Suit and Dead Bodies



PLASTIC TONES – "Wash Me With Love" 12"

What we've got here is female-fronted pop music from Helsinki that's got a punk edge. Thirty years ago, this would have been punk. These days, it's pop. That's not to take away from the release at all, because it's super catchy, super melodic and super good. Still it manages to maintain a certain darkness or dreariness from start to finish. While it is mid-tempo, it will make your foot tap and your head bounce. This thing is going to spend a lot of time on my turntable. The biggest disappointment is that it's limited to six tracks. This is worth going out of your way to find. (KK)
(Svart)

PLEASE STOP – "Power Suit and Dead Bodies" EP

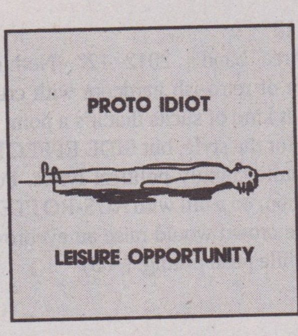
Straightforward, super fast, simplistic, and fucking awesome punk rock. Nothing new, just some basic lo-fi punk riffs played with urgency. They do it just right. It's all there, the attitude, the hooks, and the insanity. It's the kind of punk that teenagers make, and instantly become your favorite band. Although judging by the back cover, I don't think these folks are teenagers, but who the fuck cares. It's awesome. And somehow these Minnesota punx squeeze in eight songs onto this 7" slab of wax. Fucking badass! (FS)
(No Front Teeth)

POIZON – "Church Is Poizon" LP

There are a few illogical generalizations you can make about punk records, and most of the time you'll be right. For example, albums with pictures of babies on the cover are generally terrible. Any reason? Nope. A fantastic example of correlation without causation. But all rules were made to be broken. And here we have a great record with a gigantic picture of a crying baby on the front cover. These Houston punx take influences from all directions to weave together a super-driving hard-rocking record. At times they're playing punk songs that sound like they could have appeared on SONIC YOUTH's *Daydream Nation*. Other times they bring an evil country twang that seems almost CRAMPS inspired. And at times they lean on some plain and simple '77 punk to rock out on. The album is constantly evolving and never gets boring or repetitive. Definitely a cool record. (FS)
(Twistworthy)

PORTADORES DEL TINGA TINGA – "Los Hidrulicos Contemplativos" EP

Do you love early SCREECHING WEASEL, but are super embarrassed to admit it out loud because Ben Weasel is such a turd? This new band from Madrid might be the answer to your problem. The first three songs are pure pop gold that will totally remind you of your favorite WEASEL songs. The other song here is either a cover of Teenage Kicks, or a spectacular riff off. It's sung in Spanish, so I don't know exactly what they are saying, but the song title is "Me Gusta el pis (de Jose Luis)," which I'm pretty sure isn't a direct translation of "Teenage Kicks." Either way you pop punk fiends out there gotta check out this band. Super fun. (FS)
(La Negra)



PROTO IDIOT – "Leisure Opportunity" LP

This is bizarre garage punk for lunatics. Half the time, I'm rocking out to their super catchy riffs, but the other half, I feel like listening to this is making me a slightly stupider person. Perhaps the band name is highly accurate. Maybe I'm not high enough to bite onto the catchy repetition. It's a pretty wild record. Imagine if JAY REATARD was British and got really into garage rock. It's worth a mention that this is the new project from members of the HIPSHAKES. A sizable joint is highly recommended for maximum listening pleasure. (FS)
(Slovenly)

RADIAC – flexi

This is a hardcore '90s-style extravaganza from NYC. RADIAC play a familiar sound with tough vocals, reminding me of Connecticut's BROKEN, with some sinister riffs that are similar a few of which showed up in short lived NY-SF band ROTTER. RADIAC continues with dark, whirlpooling dissonant compositions, making sure to include some D-beat influenced drum parts within the traditional east coast-style hardcore sound. Overall a well-produced step in a jaded direction. Three tracks on deep blue flexi vinyl. (JR)
(self-released)

RADIATION RISKS – "Headless Horse-man / Nancy" flexi

Hands down the best sounding flexi I have ever encountered, and it's a *picture disc* at that! The two songs on this disc capture Buffalo, New York's RADIATION RISKS in a wild and frantic mood. They are the house party band that causes the party attendees to utterly destroy the house. They are the band at the show that makes the self-conscious lose their anxiety and start to boogie. They are wild-eyed and hungry and out for blood, and with this single they're going in on the kill. Don't miss this, ya ding dongs. (JD)
(Feral Kid)

RAVAGED – EP

Coarse hardcore from Germany with a raw, rough, and heavy production over technical riffs that sound pretty killer at this fidelity. Six short abrasive songs that offer enough change and harshness to avoid any metal categorization. This is 100% hardcore with strong vocals that border somewhere between black, death, and but mostly crust. Nothing surprising, but the music ended up being remarkably more impressive—lo-fi grind blasts, metallic riffs, tormented and powerful vocals, hardcore punk changes, and abrupt endings. Inspired proficient punk without pretentions. (JR)
(Kink)

RETARDED RATS – "I Hate Chocolate" Flexi EP

This is a nicely packaged double-sided flexi of German surf psychobilly trash. While not so original, it has a certain charm with the spacey riverbed guitars and NINA HAGANish Teutonic female vocals. Charge your pompadour and give it a spin. (RO)
(Killjoy)

SIDE EFFECTS – "More to Fear" 12"

This is a reissue of this Bay Area band's 2012 12". Nothing mindblowing here, but it's a nice slice of retro-ish hardcore with crust tendencies and high / low dual vocals. It kind of sucks that it's a point in the band's favor and not a prerequisite for the style, but SIDE EFFECTS deserve credit for their detailed and unflinchingly political lyrics. Pop these dudes in a time machine and put them on a bill with AUS-ROTTEN or GLYCENE MAX and nobody in the crowd would raise an eyebrow. They would, however, spill their 40s while push pitting. (AU)
(En Tu Kara)

SQUISHERS – "Too Damn Careless" LP

From a few far-flung corners of our greater Bay Area comes SQUISHERS with their self-released debut LP. It's great! They combine members of THIS BIKE IS A PIPEBOMB, ADD/C and the BANANAS (among many others), bringing elements of each of those bands, but also taking the next logical artistic step to set it apart from their past and keep moving forward into their musical futures. Their songs are upbeat and melodic, but also sad—so fucking sad—as they sing you songs of dead friends, more dead friends, cats who have left this mortal coil, the fucked up neighbors who threaten to shoot your dog and much more. The songs have got hooks…some of them are weird and off-time in a way that will make you look like a freak in the pit, but you'll still be singing along well into the next day when you're just trying to buy some eggs at the store. Yeah, it's good. If you're a fan of their past bands or just well-written and jumpy melodic punk in general, you should get this from them. (GH)
(Squishfund)

STRUL – "Föredrar Ju Fest" EP

Swedish razor riffs from STRUL. This is a sonic wash of garage rock'n'roll mixed with spastic punk screaming with repetitive delivery. Detecting some woodblock on their mid-tempo track. This band has been pretty prolific over the past couple years. They definitely have that runaway train off the rails sound. Pissed off with hits of mangel veering on the psycho side? For sure. Exciting with variety or originality? Not really. (JR)
(Adult Crash)

SWEET KNIVES – LP

SWEET KNIVES is the zombie reckoning of LOST SOUNDS consisting of the still living members. Alicja Trout takes over full vocal duties in place of the duel-vocals position she once shared with Jay Reatard (RIP). The band seems to have calmed down a lot since their previous incarnation, so don't expect as many knee-jerk direction changes and moments of clamor in each song. Do expect a comes-with-experience focus on making each song tell exactly the story they want it to with no extra fat. It's not as loud, fast, or aggressive, but it is an excellent display of skill from a group of well-aged road dogs. "Rat In The City" is the jam to check out first. (RH)
(Big Neck)

TECHNYCOLOR – "Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien: Technycolor 1979–1981" LP

This is a compilation of this wild Swiss punk band (now long out of print) that came out a few years ago on the truly hideous Record Store Day. The first single is a true art snot classic, but it's also a true bonzer and it's cool to have it on something for those without bonzer wallet rolls…Super catchy and taut *Bloodstains Across Switzerland* sounds with insane REMO VOOR guitar solos. Pogo your brains out chart toppers for Marxist glue sniffers everywhere! Punky provocative lyrics about the prison suicide of the RAF in 1977 with Nazi references abundant. The first 45 is a bonafide *classique*, but the rest of the record is pretty sick, though not quite up to the standards set in 1979. Post punk art gloop for all. A beautiful reissue with a booklet for the intellectuals. (LG)
(Static Age)

TOUT SUITE – "Dog Gone Blues" EP

A super weird recording kinda helps this admittedly and already weird record sound even weirder. It's thunderous hardcore delivered and a breakneck pace...well, it's *mostly* that. But it doesn't really sound like there's a bass so the whole thing sounds kinda anxious, like the band hasn't really settled into their own sound. And even though the tracks are all burners, TOUT SUITE make the slow(er) parts feel really uncomfortable (I'm especially thinking "Dicks Out" here) in a way that's tough to put a finger on. Primary vocals are gruff and pissed, backups are higher pitched and anxious...and all I want to do is listen again and try to figure the shit out. (WN)
(Prejudice Me / Pumpkin)

THE TOXICS – LP

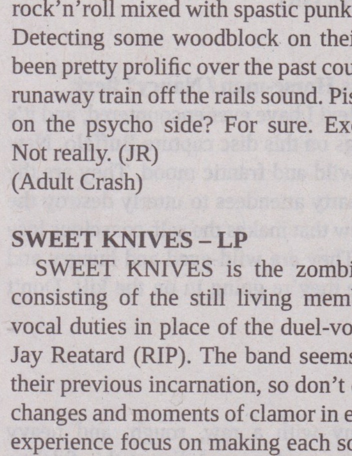
The first song is not bad, but song two and everything after is crackin'. They turn it up a bit. ROYAL HEADACHE meets the REATARDS. Song three the singer stops yelling and starts singing and he's got chops! Hey this one's a winner. As this goes on it sounds more and more familiar...did the singer sing in that Epitaph band RANDY? If not you could have fooled me. Anyone remember RANDY?They were great. This passes. Oh and for those of you who like the SONIC AVENUES or even NUCLEAR SPRING I'd check this out too. It's quality all the way through—solid songs, solid playing....Just an overall good listen for fans of melodic garage punk with some juice. (P$)
(Blast of Silence / Beast)

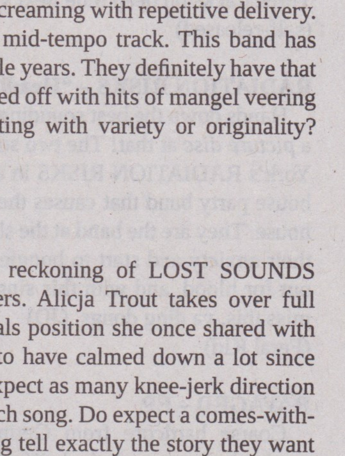
THE TRILLIONAIRS – "Haunted / Alcohol"

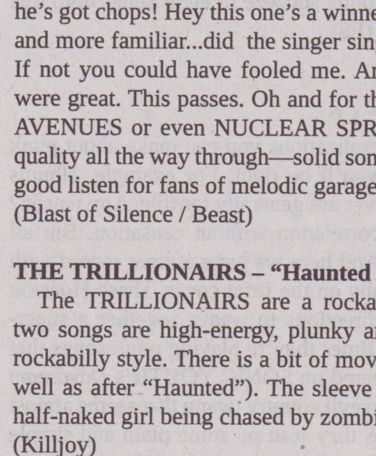
The TRILLIONAIRS are a rockabilly band from Germany. The two songs are high-energy, plunky and slick. The 7" is the standard rockabilly style. There is a bit of movie dialogue before each song (as well as after "Haunted"). The sleeve features a cartoon drawing of a half-naked girl being chased by zombies. (CK)
(Killjoy)

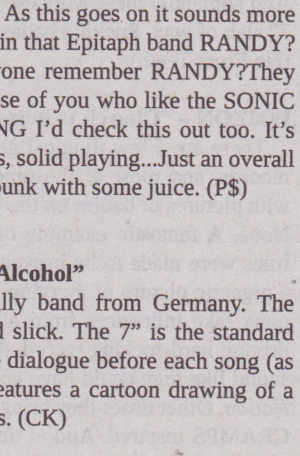
TROIKA – "Una Vida" EP

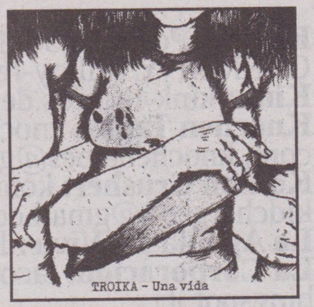
It just looks like a record that is going to rule...and it does. Frantic and insistent Spanish punk that rises far above their rudimentary punk foundation. The *je ne sais quoi* is key here, because how else can you



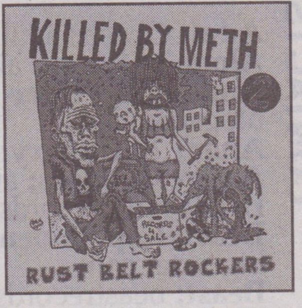








WOOD CHICKENS
COUNTRYCIDE



say that the guitars are (sometimes) kinda out of tune and the riffs are pretty basic and the drums are rock solid but also pretty basic...but fuck, these women have *it*. And that's the point. It's straightforward punk with fiery insistent vocals—perhaps nothing special at face value, but incredibly powerful *(and very special)* once you pay attention. If you aren't sold by "Desterradas" then you don't have a soul. (WN)
(A Agonia De Vivir / Candao / El Fary Es Dios / Grita O Muere / La Negra / Muerte A Tipo / No Thanks! Pifia / Pumpkin / Punk / Soroi / Tranzphobia / Victim)

ULTRARAT – "D-Pression" EP
Fuck, this record couldn't be any more bare-bones. Stripped-down D-beat hardcore in a stripped-down sleeve for maniacs only. The recording is as raw as raw gets, with occasional leads emerging from the murk to compete with the reverbed to fuck vocals. Pounding D-beats lurk below in the mix, haunted by the spectral presence of a bass that's more myth than sonic element. Maybe it's the Montreal address, but I get a bit of a VOIVOD-ish vibe from the riff-filled record-closing "Secta." Everything else here is short, to-the-point D-beat in the modern style. DISCHARGE are in the mix but the band owe just as much to ABSOLUT or INEPSY as the old masters. It's a solid debut for sure, I'd be curious to see if they choose to follow the metallic influences of "Secta" or revert to traditionalism for their next release. (AU)
(Swollen City)

UPSET NOISE / WARFARE – split EP
I was so excited to see that this rare Italian gem has been reissued! These are the first (and my favorite) recordings of Italian hardcore rippers UPSET NOISE. Often not as recognized as much as their peers of the same era, UPSET NOISE played fast, to the point, no frills, and furious hardcore punk similar to that of DECLINO, RAW POWER, INDIGESTI, and NEGAZIONE. WARFARE? is a band that is not very widely recognized in this era of Italian hardcore punk but their sound sets them apart from many of their more hardcore-leaning contemporaries. Still fast and still pissed as hell, but they draw more influences from anarcho-punk bands such as TOXIC WASTE and FLUX OF PINK INDIANS. Where many Italian hardcore bands of this era relied much heavier on speed, chaos, and ferocity, WARFARE? is catchy and is punk you can pogo to. This EP also comes with a fold out insert / poster complete with lyrics and other political imagery. Whether you just love hardcore or are trying to deepen your understanding of Italian hardcore, save yourself a $100 and pick up this great reissue! (BP)
(Threat from the Past)

WAR BRIDES – "Regrets" LP
Modern hardcore by way of retro UNSANE and/or AmRep worship. The record *sounds* amazing, massive and full bodied music that reminds me of TIME IN MALTA as much as it makes me want to listen to JESUS LIZARD. It's worth noting that the lyrics kinda kill the intensity for me, but I don't have to read them so I will continue enjoying the sounds. (WN)
(Triple Eye Industries)

WOOD CHICKENS – "Countrycide" LP
Despite what you might think, I'm a pretty harsh critic of all punk things tainted with country or folk music. "Insert genre here"-a-billy and cowpunk are at the bottom of my list of tolerable styles, and I have an incredibly long list of shit I find tolerable. That being said, this country influenced punk band is pretty tight. Sure, there are a couple throwaways, and they wear cowboy hats (which is like 2 1/2 strikes!!), but this comes off more like something you'd find on Lumpy Records, or that Jimmy Youtube channel, and a lot less like ELMER (which ruled), or DASH RIP ROCK, or any other thing that usually comes to mind when you hear a band labeled as cowpunk. Great, sloppy punk with tasteful Southern-ish reverbed solos, and a few cool moments of trippy, MEAT PUPPETS style groovy fingerpicking made this a pleasant fucking surprise practically the whole way through. It seems like nobody told these Wisconsin turkeys that cowpunk was a novelty, and I'm glad. (DZ)
(Big Neck)

V/A – "Crossed Out Tribute Compilation" EP
Here are a fourteen, global powerviolence bands, covering fourteen CROSSED OUT songs, and all on one little seven inch. Some of the bands featured are SICKMARK, SCUM HUMAN, and DERBE LEBOWSKI. All I can say is that CROSSED OUT is fucking sick, and these bands are fucking sick, so why the fuck not! (BA)
(Knochen Tapes / Nasty Production)

V/A – "Killed By Meth #2" LP
Fourteen more freaky shits from modern Midwestern bands such as GUN, ERIK NERVOUS, RADIATION RISKS, FLESH RAG, and more. Not as good as #1, and no tracks that will make you go absolutely bonkers (though plenty of these bands have better tracks elsewhere), but a decent sampling of what's going on in the rust belt these days, and worthy of using *Killed By Death* ripoff / homage imagery.The first third of the songs are generally more mellow rockers, while the pace and attitude picks up after that. (DG)
(It's Trash)

V/A – "Lasst die Alten Sterben" LP
This is my first time reviewing a movie soundtrack! Happy day. It's a Swiss film, therefore boasting a soundtrack of late '70s Swiss punk. No exclusive tunes here, just raging classics from SPERMA, MOTHER'S RUIN, TNT, VORWÄRTS, the BASTARDS, NASAL BOYS, the SQUIRT, FRESH COLOR, and a few tracks that didn't inspire me. As a compilation it's not nearly as comprehensive as the *Pogo Punks* LP or *Bloodstains Across Switzerland*, but the sound is mastered loud and the gatefold packaging and booklet are really nice and informative. I was happy to be prompted to learn the brilliance of "Dany Hot Dog" by MOTHER'S RUIN, and I'll be fucked if FRESH COLOR didn't unleash the hottest punk track outta Switzerland when they wrote "Cry For Fame." Fight me. That Dieter Meier was something! (MA)
(Swisspunk)

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BDR: rerunrecordsstl.com
Beach Impediment: beachimpedimentrecords.bigcartel.com
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Big Muddy: bigmuddyrecords.com
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Do What?: facebook.com/do-what-records
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Good Times: goodtimesrecordsfast.bandcamp.com
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Indisciplinarian: indisciplinarian.bandcamp.com
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Keroleen: keroleenrecords.bandcamp.com
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Kink: kink-records.de
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La Corporación: lacorporaciondiscos.blogspot.it
La Negra: lanegrashop.es
La Vida Es Un Mus: lavidaesunmus.com
Last Hour: lasthourrecords.bandcamp.com
Les Nains Aussi: lustucrust.org
Let's Pretend: letspretendrecords.com
Live Fast Die: livefastdierecs.bandcamp.com
Muerte A Tipo: muerteatipo.bandcamp.com
No Front Teeth: nofrontteeth.co.uk
Now Or Never: nowornever-distro.yolasite.com, nowornever@esiv.net
Permanent Lifetime: Abusements.com
Phantom: phantomrecords.tk
Phobia: phobiarecords.net
Pifia: pifiarecords.bandcamp.com
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Prejudice Me: prejudice_me@yahoo.co.uk
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Pumpkin: punpkinrecords.co.uk
Punk Fox: chris.punkfox@gmail.com
Radiac: radiacbk.bandcamp.com
Rinderherz: rinderherzrecords.ch
Rogues Realm: roguesrealm.bandcamp.com, roguesrealmrecords.bigcartel.com
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Shield: shieldrecordings.com
Slovenly: Slovenly.com
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Soroll: distrisoroll.blogspot.com
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SVAB: 123svab@seznam.cz
Svart: Puutarhakatu 49, 20100 Turku, FINLAND, svartrecords.com
Swollen City: swollencityrecords.bandcamp.com
The Sign: thesignrecords.com
Threat From The Past: give-em-hell.com
Thrilling Living: thrillingliving.com
Triple Eye Industries: tripleeyeindustries.com
Twistworthy: PO Box 4491, Austin TX 78765
Water Slide: watersliderecords.com
Water Wing: waterwingrecords.com
Weirdly: weirdlyrecords.net
World's Appreciated Kitsch: worldsappreciatekitsch.bigcartel.com

DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(BP) Ben Paulson
(GH) Greg Harvester
(HB) Heather Blotto
(JR) Jason Ryan
(KP) Kenn Pseudo
(MB) Matt Badenhop
(MD) Michael de Toffoli
(MR) Matt Reynolds
(WN) Robert Collins

AK47 – *Burn the Rats Out* – This long-running Canadian harcore band speeds it up every so often to remind you they're hardcore, but the rest of the time they clock in at a crunchy mid-tempo, couching tough guy punk with metal and hard rock. Razorblade vocals and very, very competent guitar solos. The lyrics seem all "baseball bats" and "never back down" at first, but really it's pretty thoughtful and socially conscious stuff. My (legitimately) favorite moments involved riffs that sounded lifted from the more melodic moments of *Peace Sells, But Who's Buying?* I mean, who does that? Would probably go over well as background music at a tattoo shop frequented by guys who wear backwards baseball caps. (MR) (31-song CD-R, lyrics included, PO Box 5447 Stn. B, Victoria B.C. V8R-6S4 CANADA)

АМПУТАЦИЯ – Churning metal-crust from Moscow's АМПУТАЦИЯ (which means AMPUTATION). It's hard to find words to describe how dark and how brutal the recording is, but these punks have taken old school death / black metal, grabbed it by the throat and breathed life into it...and their debut release is devastating. Do not sleep on this. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, reforestationrecords.bandcamp.com)

ARMPITS – Driving, pounding metal with hardcore sensibilities. ARMPITS is coming out of Boston, MA to deliver five fast songs. I like the screamed, raw vocals coming across here, and the change-up / breakdown moments are solid, but the riffs are a little repetitive. The songs, judging by the lyrics, are about cute, angsty stuff like daydreaming, getting sick from sharing a juice box, and having a crush on someone who – *whoops!* – brought a date to the party. Stand out song of the tape is hands down "Food Fight," which is definitely the best song about a food fight I can recall hearing. "*Mashed potatoes soaring through the air / stashing corned beef in your hair / the steaks are high.*" (KP) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, armpits.bandcamp.com)

ARSENE OBSCENE / THE SPEED BABES – Chicago's SPEED BABES is a one person act playing garage rock that is simple, fast, and totally hook driven. The vocals sound like they were recorded with the singer's head underwater, which made me think this band sound sounded like bratty teens who ran away from Atlantis to listen to Iggy Pop and smoke cigarettes. Snotty 'n' raging, the songs are short and make me feel like I huffed something. Meanwhile, Nice, France's ARSENE OBSCENE feels a bit more like the DAMNED, the RAMONES, and the HIVES influenced swaggering garage rock. Singing in French, they bring the frenzy in these fun, head-bopping tracks through a fuzzy-feeling and simple recording. Hell, I wanted to dance. (KP) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, wfbr.bandcamp.com)

BASTÄRD – *...In The Name Of Beast* – Just... fuck. Primal and fierce Russian metalpunk with a recording that could not possibly be more appropriately evil for the style. When the chorus drops in "Black Metal Kings," the hairs on my arms stand up, and that's the first damn track. Full charge, maximum energy, fist pounding...and *dangerous*. It's been awhile since I have heard something this dangerous. So fuckin' good. (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, reforestationrecords.bandcamp.com)

CANDY – Fucked up sounding and hard stomping Vancouver hardcore from SYSTEMATIK, PURA MANIA and RAPID LOSS peoples. It's as good as that pedigree would suggest. Bombastic, ferocious and desperate. I hear Japanese influences, even within the framework of riff-heavy North American hardcore...great shits. (WN) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, sickcharade@gmail.com)

THE CHERRIES – *Self Titled 2* – Driving UK power pop (from the Bay Area) in the classic tradition. That's to say that I could easily be listening to a lost 30 year old recording, except that sometimes the CHERRIES lean towards the punk end (say, the SLAUGHTER full length), and sometimes it's just pure bliss filled pop. I'm not sure what these kids are trying to do, but they've got me hooked. (WN) (17-song cassette/CD-R, lyrics not included, dacherries.bandcamp.com)

CHOW LINE – After a long breakdown intro (my least favorite thing that hardcore has given us) CHOW LINE rockets into an unrelenting spread of tight and fast hardcore. Plenty of rhythmic tricks to hold your attention. The loud, balanced mix pushes everything right to the front. Perfectly direct. While there's nothing particularly new here, you're not gonna find a much better representation of the style. (MA) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, chowline.bandcamp.com)

COLLATE – *Material Inspection* – Featuring DIY luminary Erika Elizabeth (*MRR* columnist, renowned DJ, *Dynamite Hemorrhage* writer [BTW, is there a harder, more awkward word to spell than "hemorrhage"? Couldn't you just call your zine "Dynamite Bloodbath" or something?]). GANG OF FOUR and UNIT 4 are probably not a bad starting points, but this is much more head-bobbing than dancey, so maybe LITHICS is closer in both time and place? In any case, COLLATE's dry needlepoint guitars and monotone (but not monotonous) vocals pretty masterfully stretch each one to two riff song to just the perfect length. Calculated, but not pretentious, COLLATE never push the music anywhere it doesn't need to go. A focused, fun tape. Really, really good. (MR) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, collate.bandcamp.com)

COTARD / DEJA GRAVY – *Lost Wards* – COTARD is the lowest recording ever featuring Neanderthal blasts of dance macabre carnival SCREAMERS-esque music, juvenile drum machine programs, with vocals that remind me a lot of neo-industrial party punk—a literal high school project, and that is not to say a bad thing. Side two is one track from DEJA GRAVY, an extremely bass-heavy grunge groove that transforms into brain-sucking doom mush. Get the pillow off the mic on both sides. (JR) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, forcedabandonmentrecords.bandcamp.com)

CRACKED – *Demo 2017* – Pristine and blitzing OC Hardcore that may be one of the tightest demos that I've ever heard. With persistent piston drums, merciless riffs, and rabid barking vocals, it's so intact that it'd jumpstart your heart. "Reinforcement" has a kind of call-to-arms build up, giving you a moment to let your adrenaline catch up before sprinting into the next stretch. Because they have their pacing down so well it makes it very easy to listen to, and I'm really looking forward to what they come up with next. (MD) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, crackedhc.bandcamp.com)

EXECUTION – *Barbaric Torture and Brutal Mutilations* – Damn, this tape is a ripper! EXECUTION hails from Melbourne, Australia and plays frantic, chaotic and dark hardcore along the lines of CHEETAH CHROME MOTHERFUCKERS and EU'S ARSE. The sheer ferocity and chaos brings CONFUSE to mind. I stayed intrigued throughout this whole tape due to the different twists and turns that this demo takes. The riffs are catchy as hell, the tempo changes are often jarring, and the vocals are ferocious and relentless. Although the Italian hardcore influence is very apparent, I found myself being pleasantly surprised by all the different elements that are woven into the songwriting that kept me guessing, which is often not the case with many hardcore bands of this style. Keeping hardcore interesting and not predictable can be a difficult task and EXECUTION seems to pull it off with ease. No lyric sheet included but I'm definitely curious about the lyrics of "Rojava's Utopia" (up the YPJ/YPG).This tape is fucking great, check it out! (BP) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, hardcorevictim.bandcamp.com)

FINAL SLUM WAR – *Another Day, Another Struggle* – Brutally raw South American D-beat from 2013, unearthed and reissued in Eastern Europe. Everything sounds like a torrential downpour, everything sounds like terror. Pure gold. (5-song cassette, lyrics included, lutralutrarec@gmail.com, rawpunk@riseup.net)

FURTHER CHARGES – *Destruction Satellite* – Raw and earnest UK82 influenced outfit from Moscow that start their demo with a drunken irreverence. But then FURTHER CHARGES blast off and step on the accelerator…and that is when the shit gets real; real wild and really off the rails. After a ramshackle hi-speed D-beat burner, they continue with UK inspired punk, but with way more energy than the opening track, as if they were trying to weed out the fakes before pulling back the curtain on their full arsenal. Good ass shits. (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, lutralutrarec@gmail.com)

GASP – *Sore For Days* – This is a reissue of the 1996 demo from this early powerviolence band. I'll admit to having never heard this band before cold listening to this tape and I my face was absolutely blown off. Powerviolence? Absolutely, though I'd describe it more or less succinctly as hardcore that grinds, with occasional sludge-drudge moments too. There were moments I felt little twinges of BOTCH, ORCHID, and FILTH, which in retrospect makes total sense for the time period. Grinding dog-growl guitar riffs, occasional blastbeats, and the kind of vocals that sound like the singer had their throat slit. The aesthetic on the tape insert is that old school punk collage shit of scenes of misery, bombed out buildings, and total fuckery. Fitting, since the lyrics make you want to pull your car over and throw up blood and nails. In short, this tape absolutely rips and rules and is highly recommended. The tapes might be in short supply but thanks to Big Brother we've got this whole internet thing and they've got a Bandcamp page. Click the fuck on it and break some brains. (KP) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, gaspsore4days.bandcamp.com)

GUN SHY – Dream punk and / or aggressive twee, I feel like a slight alteration to the mix on this demo and I'm in my bedroom in 1987. Guitars are raw and filthy, like Ron Asheton sitting in on a PRIMITIVES session, and it's what gives GUN SHY an edge. I'm not even sure if that edge makes them better since the vocals are the standout part of the recording, but it makes me pay attention and I like what I hear. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, gunshynhv.bandcamp)

HEART BREAKER – Is it more angry and fast? Or more brooding and dark? What are these women yelling about? HEART BREAKER's demo feels like it reflects a lot of what is going on in punk all over the place right now. More voices of people who aren't dudes, variation, and experimentation among songs on the same release. So DIY it hurts (in a good way) and totally backs up the band's lyrics critiquing what's wrong with punk – scene hierarchies, cool-guy status drama, political hypocrisy, the imperative for all participants to perform masculinity to be allowed into punk spaces, just to name a few. HEART BREAKER turns punk back on itself, acting as agitator and provocateur. You will either love this or find it reckless and annoying – which will show what kind of punk you are. (HB) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, heartbreakerboston.bandcamp.com)

HOARDER – *Buried* – Listening to this fills me with a determined rage. So much of the lyrical content is relatable, with songs about abuse, betrayal, and other scream inducing topics that convey anger and pain in raw, open-wound, voice-screamed-hoarse hardcore. Recommended for people into high-pitched vocals, breakdowns, and feedback. (JB) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, hoarderoly.bandcamp.com)

JOHN HOFFMAN – *Not Wet* – On this solo tape JOHN HOFFMAN brings the pop hooks from his band VACATION and melds them with the fuzzy bedroom recording magic of 50 MILLION, HOT NEW MEXICANS, early OF MONTREAL demos and what I imagine GUIDED BY VOICES probably sounds like if I ever actually listened to them. It's really loose and has a great warm feeling to it. The whole release is beautifully all over the map, inviting spats of noise, indie rock, spazzy beats and rock into every corner. This is not to be missed. (GH) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, letspretendrecords.com)

HULDREKULL – *What Else Will Fade?* – I enjoy the beginning of this tape because I like lasers. Cosmic lasers, opening up a doom-laden path to a simple speck of an existence. HULDREKULL play bizarre and thought-provoking blackened psyche metal that soars in the cosmos at some points and grinds into the ground at others. Distant vocals narrate a tormented life. The song structures are easy to follow, giving solid hails to punk ghosts of the past. Some great mid-tempo parts that groove on for longer than needed, which I think usually works for such an abrasive genre. Cool punk songs with blackened heavy riffs. The lyrics have an innocence and humility that is felt through music that is frozen. (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, huldrekall.bandcamp.com)

INTERCISION – *Their Names* – Topical, social justice lyrical content from this Portland band. Tight galloping hardcore that suffers from the songs all sounding too much the same, mostly due to repeated and unvarying vocal patterns and timbre. Like AUS-ROTTEN but not as crusty, and there are a few hints of the Memphis by way of PDX sound from a decade and a half ago. They do a PIST cover for good measure. (MA) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, intercision.bandcamp.com)

LÖTFETT – *The Bootleg* – Slow melodic Oi! from Germany. Sounds drunk, filled with intentional coughs and spewing. Okay, I can read *ein bisschen Deutsch*, and with song titles like "Pornojob," (in German) "She Sleeps Pretty", and "Bart Dame," I'm really not interested in much more. No offense. Messy, clanging lo-fi with really nice packaging, red cardstock sleeve with white screen. Hmm. (JR) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, phantomrecords.bandcamp.com)

LOVERS CLUB – LOVERS CLUB leak out a molasses version of the moody, baritone garage rock championed by NICK CAVE lovers and bands like CRYSTAL STILTS. I'm sure JOY DIVISION is an influence. There's pseudo-BO DIDDLEY beats and nods to the CRAMPS, but never the fun of either. Spooky stuff, probably cool if you've been smoking name brand cigarettes and watching a lot of *Twin Peaks*. I know these guys are punks because they included a note with their tape that closed "Kawakami Forever," but this demo only qualifies in the broadest of senses. That said, I can get into it. (MR) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, loversclub.bandcamp.com)

MAN HANDS – *The New Malaise* – MAN HANDS is definitely a punk band, but there's something about their herky-jerky energy that recalls the kind of indie (not emo) that *Pitchfork* would have flipped its wig over circa 2002. I mean that as an unadulterated compliment: MAN HANDS is manic and bleeding echo from the gills. Lots of winners on this disc. Not like DEVO in the way CONEHEADS is like DEVO, but sort of like DEVO if DEVO listened to FUGAZI and *Killed by Death* comps. Trim, marinated, and cooked at 475°. (MR) (10-song CD-R, lyrics not included, 1429 E Edgemont Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85006)

MASCULINITY CRISIS – The Universe has brought loads of dream-punk to my ears this month, and Seattle's MASCULINITY CRISIS might just be the best of the bunch. Physical movement mandatory, as this demo makes the dreary sound beautiful with two upbeat numbers before descending into gloriously gothic and demanding punk to wrap things up. Rarely have I been this eager to hear more songs. (WN) (3-song CD-R, lyrics not included, masculinitycrisis.bandcamp.com)

MASSÄCRE DIVINE – *Dios Segundos Para O Fim De Tudo Duas Bombas Nucleares Em Nome De Deus* – Raw Brazilian D-beat leaning heavily (and shamelessly) on the metallic end of the DISCHARGE model. "Divino Massacre" is the fukkn rager here, especially when the vocals kinda try to get melodic. Fans of the *Beijando A Morte* EP from a few years back will not be disappointed and neither will fans of impassioned D-beat. (WN) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, lutralutrarec@gmail.com, rawpunk@riseup.net)

MAXIMUM ERNST – *Bring Your Own Pencap* – This thing is so blown out that I almost wonder if it's a duplication error, but I refuse to do the research required to find out—I review the material in front of me. Period. Thunderous upbeat dirges that occasionally descend into noise / art rock of the most pretentious varieties, all with monotonous drums and psyched-out, over-treated howling vocals. A couple of tracks in you get used to the damaged sound of the drums, and the fact that most of the riffs (I'm just assuming there are some) are completely lost in the swirl of sound...and then you really start to appreciate MAXIMUM ERNST. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, evernever.records@gmail.com)

THE MILD – *Left to Starve* – Oh heck yes. Punish us with those blastbeats. Let the breakdown leave us swinging our arms like the apes we are as we stumble around the pit, wanting more. It's hard not to throw in a well-intentioned HIS HERO IS GONE mention, though the guitarist in this band operates a little more wild fingering than I'd identify with the mentioned band. The MILD is straddling metal and hardcore (metalcore!) like a drunk thrasher on a mechanized bull. Totally sick. Total head-bang material, and a nicely drawn cover to boot. Coming out of Venice, Italy, this tape left me wanting totally fucking more. Check them out to satisfy the maniac ripper inside of you. (KP) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, themild.bandcamp.com)

NEOPHOBE – Melodic but a little frenzied garage punk out of Philly. The five songs on this tape are fast and catchy, with lyrics about anxiety, neurosis, and general mental health: all themes most of us can identify with. (KP) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, neophobe.bandcamp.com)

NICKY REYNOLDS AND HIS PUSHERS – Sweet romantic pop songs with just enough profanity and cynicism to remind us that it's actually punk. Some of the tracks remind me of ONION FLAVORED RINGS, but instead of pop-punk roots it incorporates an '80s hard-pop sound tinged with the aural equivalent of that soft-focus star-filter effect they put on Glamour Shots. (HB) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included)

NIDSTANG – *Retribution Will Come* – An enigmatic tape that starts out with an atmospheric intro, witch (sic) quickly erupts into a punk diminutive angular cacophony. Throughout the tape there is an insane hissing and buzzing like a panicked hive. This solo project from Olympia is very punk, and somewhat predictable, but the riffs truly rot from time to time. The drums are clamoring and sloppy like a drunken monk frolicking within the pines on a cold autumn night. This is not permafrost winter black metal, but you'd be hard pressed to get a shovel into it. For fans of macabre punk and raw organic black metal. Only 100, you must act now. (JR) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, nidstang.bandcamp.com)

NUCLEAR ALTAR – *Mankind In Decline* – A mash up of rudimentary D-beat and boombox *dupa-dupa* delivered with no bass and forceful female vocals. Raw punk, not noise punk. (WN) (14-song cassette, lyrics included, $3 + postage, kktz666@gmail.com, oldensonorities.blogspot.hr, Boris Milakovic, Sv. Duha 30, 34000 Pozega CROATIA)

OBSCENE BEING – *Rot and Decay* – Galloping punk from Vancouver carrying a few *Punk-O-Rama* vibes. Imagine the shenanigans of RKL balanced with the poppy thrash of GRIMPLE. A myriad of vocal styles makes things a little wacky at times (everything between clear singing and cookie monster growl). Dudes are having a great time. (MA) (5-song CD-R, lyrics included, obscenebeing.bandcamp.com)

ORDER OF NIGHT – This kicks off with a spooky reversed keyboard/synth intro, and then slowly progresses into sparse, dark and somber melodies on "In the Sink." The vocal delivery and general dark and somewhat campy ambiance brings CHRISTIAN DEATH and 45 GRAVE to mind, while some of the guitar work brings in an interesting element of atmospheric / psychedelic rock. Some of the more stripped down, atmospheric and melodic guitar parts seem comparable to *Mesh and Lace* era MODERN ENGLISH. The more folk / psychedelic guitar work on "Basilides" followed by the dark, ambient outro (think flutes and layered, dissonant electronics) was my favorite part of this tape. (BP) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, orderofnight.bandcamp.com)

OX – Six songs driven by beautiful, haunting melodies and intertwining guitar leads, with just enough "large cave" effect to make you believe it was actually recorded in a large cave. OX leads us along exactly the type of emotional odyssey we look for in fantasy metal – technical, expertly executed, and with synths in the mix. The lyrics are truly poetic and intense. OX will transform your mundane daily tasks into epic feats of courage in the face of unspeakable tragedy. OX will resonate with and awaken your inner warrior and your indwelling quest for justice. Are you ready? (HB) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, oxox.bandcamp.com)

PERMANENT TENSION – A brief two-song mathcore demo from PERMANENT TENSION—a tension that lasts about ten minutes. "The Saddest Smile" is a clamoring feverously picked guitar driven track with SWING KIDS screams and CROMTECH abrasion. "A Passage for a Trumpet" is chugga-chugging. This is twenty year old post-hardcore that was recorded two years ago. (JR) (2-song cassette, lyrics included, forcedabandonmentrecords.bandcamp.com)

PLEITE – *Im Gang Vor Die Hunde* – I never start out with making this note, but I have to say this might be the finest tape packaging I think I've ever found submitted for review. Full-color gatefold on heavy cardstock, fine graphic design, insert and card wrap with labels on the tape to match. The music: interesting samples and an excellently produced recording. Mid-tempo hardcore from Germany with buzz saw guitars and bass. Dual vocals taking me back to UNCURBED days. Of the German I can understand, the lyrical content is romantic and reflective. Complex writing without trying hard. Think LA FRACTION. I like this tape a lot. (JR) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, pliete.bandcamp.com)

PLASTIC TONES – Brilliantly addictive Finnish power pop nuggets. I keep wanting them to let off the brakes and see how they handle the fast stuff, but in the end I think it's that tension that really makes them so creamy. Vocals are absolutely on point (let's be honest, this is the easiest part of the genre to fuck up), and the guitarist absolutely nails the hooks. Syrupy sweet and top notch. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, soundcloud.com)

PROJECT YOUTH – *Middle East* – Looks like the UK82 trend is alive and well in Istanbul, as well as everywhere else. This quartet is doing more of a melodic mid-paced version rather than the pogo. Think 999 or COCK SPARRER rather than Riot City. The production is punchy and the vocals are interesting sounding—sung emphatically with a touch of vibrato (hence the COCK SPARRER reference). A few tracks are sung in their native tongue, but most in English. No future, criticism of Sharia law, TV lies, and of course war in the Middle East are a few topics addressed. Powerful shit. (MA) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, projectyouth.bandcamp.com)

REBEL SPIES – *Rise!* – Manicured mall-style punk outta Detroit. Heavily compressed, vocal harmonies, and poppy drums. Reminiscent of some '90s Fat Wreck / Epitaph stuff. Members of SUICIDE MACHINES, HELLMOUTH, FORDIRELIFESAKE...(MA) (5-song CD-R, lyrics not included, undercomm.org)

REMISO – Thrash attack from Malmö, featuring folks from Sweden, Chile and Brazil. Accurately self-described as between metalpunk and crossover, but there's also a heavy Brazilian hardcore influence here (as evidenced by the OHLO SECO and RATOS DE PORAO covers). Sung in Portuguese, hard hitting at maximum brutality, with screaming guitar solos flourishing in the right places. As a person with a low tolerance for metal, this never irked me one bit, probably because most of the songs are under two minutes. (MA) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, remiso.bandcamp.com)

SBSM – *Leave Your Body* – Not that long ago I asked my friend Kevin to make a mixtape of Industrial music so I could get a better sense of the genre. There was a particular song or two that was so discordant and sensory-overloading to my 4/4 tempo conditioning that it created a blind terror in me that *only* music can. I felt sick, and wanted to turn it off. Listening to Oakland's SBSM, who I wouldn't necessarily describe as industrial per se, I am overcome at times with a similar blind fear. It sounds as if there is a gateway to a hellish dimension in my speakers, full of factories making tumors of teeth and rotting, glistening eyeballs that are being beamed...and it's all transposed into a wave of fuzz and drum beats into your screaming brain cells. The closest comparison I can come up with is if you took ATARI TEENAGE RIOT, didn't let them sleep for a month, and kept them in some kind of horror movie-like basement-scenario, and slowed everything the fuck down. Regardless of the pale comparison, it's gripping and absorbing stuff, and touches parts of your brain like a finger in surgery. The lyrics, while hard to discern at times, are fantastic when read along. This group very well captures the terrifying, visceral experiences that can come with living in this modern fucked world (and Oakland in particular). It sounds like the rage at the end of the world, which needs to end because it's just that fucked. I'm terrified to go see this band, as I might lose the little hold on reality I have left. Hell, if I listened to it on the train on an off-day I'd have to pull the emergency exit handle, leap off the train, and run into the dark catacombs under civilization to scream myself to sleep. Check this band out. (KP) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, sbsmoakland.bandcamp.com)

SCHMUTZIGER MENSCH – Gritting hardcore from Hamburg. Gnarly and notably heavy bass lines, extremely blown out vocals and not in a bad way, mid-tempo breakdowns throughout. Seems a bit on the nose, but I do like the conversation between the members / instruments. It's almost polite for a band called "Dirty Man." If only this sounded a little filthier. This is good ol' basement show hardcore that does the dishes for you up in the kitchen. (crash!) (JR) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, xschmutzigermenschx.bandcamp.com)

SHIT BOYS – *The Literal Death* – The catchy and anthemic sounds of the late '(D4, HOT WATER MUSIC) delivered with a distinctly modern energy that reminds me of WHITE LUNG even while the vocals sound like JAWBREAKER (sometimes). (WN) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, byrne.gary@gmail.com)

SIDETRACKED – *Impediment* – Tacoma, Washington's SIDETRACKED has put out over twenty releases, and while I can't comment on the rest of them, I can say this tape is quite memorable. Powerviolence that's so fast that you think there's something wrong with the tape. After my initial listen I was sure *MRR* had gotten a bunk cassette, but when I checked them out online, sure enough, the longest song on this album clocks in at ten seconds. It's brutal, it's incredibly fast, and yet while its brevity might seem like a detracting aspect it instead really makes you focus your listening in and try to grasp onto each slamming chord or guttural lyric, much like a person sliding down a rocky slope scrambles for a handhold. It's cool to hear something that makes the LOCUST songs feel hours long by comparison, while at the same time sounds like, in tone and lyrical content, hardcore distilled down to its essence. (KP) (15-song cassette, lyrics included, sidetracked.bandcamp.com)

TIGHTLIP – *Demo MMXVII* – Spirited freaky hardcore from Ottawa that plays with screams, creepy reverb effects, and freaky noise solos without letting that get in the way of maintaining breakneck tempos. There's a lot going on! Where some punk bands may express anger through toughness, this band intimidates through unhinged-ness. Thoughtful and exciting and fast and angry, all at the same time. (HB) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, tightlip.bandcamp.com)

THE TORTURED – It's really easy to take a pop punk band at face value and dismiss them as fun and easy music, and that's where these recordings will challenge you. This is twelve songs in fifty fucking minutes, which plays out as a songbook of material with a range to fit each corner. Front person Johnny Lawrie presents himself as a songwriter that can adapt punk and mold it into different shapes and sounds. It's clear even by the opening track, which is an eight-minute guitar-slinger Americana song that grows into a chanting pop punk anthem when the band plows in. The whole thing has moments that start as a solo confession piece ranging from punk to hardcore to danceable post-punk, then finds its way back to a pop punk hook. They're not afraid of lengthy choruses to keep the pit circling, intimate solo confessions, pianos, or hiding behind metaphors. The trio takes you through this long atlas of thoughts and genres spoken in a pop punk language, and ends with this big seven-minute clear headed jam. I'm really impressed with their output, and from what I understand there's more to come. (MD) (12-song CD-R, lyrics included, facebook.com/thetortured1)

TRASH CAT – This is some real-ass punk! Nothing too fancy, with straightforward chord progressions and raspy, screamy vocals, it sounds a lot like a DIY band from the '80s when (in my imagination at least) punk was less self-conscious and not having an ongoing existential crisis. TRASH CAT is fast, aggressive, and fun without quite being hardcore. There are some slow-screaming over sludgy-breakdown parts that remind me of a low-res version of Portland's HARUM SCARUM. Includes cool lyrics about being shamed for using food stamps, government repression of poor people, and shoplifting from Goodwill. It's awesome to see a band making songs that are so relevant, and so totally punk without pretense. (HB) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, trashcatpunk.bandcamp.com)

TRUTH ASSASSIN – *In The Shadow Of Tyranny* – This is the first really dedicated anti-Trump album I've heard, in that 100% of it is exclusively focused on the worst and most embarrassing president in US history. It reminds me of early '90s hardcore that existed in the same era as the seeds of Berkeley pop punk, in that it's exclusively straight to the point. The lyrics tend to stumble in the effort to keep everything rhyming, and the drums can be kind of sloppy, but it gives it the raw purity of a frustrated rant. Think of it as a manifesto with a soundtrack. It ends with a powerful long track of Trump soundbites accompanied by eerie, haunting piano that really drives the point home that we're living in dangerous times. This album is fun to listen to, but the bottom line message is that we need to stay vigilant and angry. I recommend this, because it's an audio time capsule of what life in 2017 in the first few months of this administration has been like. (MD) (10-song CD-R, lyrics included, truthassassin.bandcamp.com)

TUNNIT – *Pois/Tunnit* – Two track cassingle of polished Finnish goth pop from 2015. Think GHOST DANCE but with keyboards more prominent than guitars. Shit could be straight outta 1984. Fans of contemporary stuff like BELGRADO or CRIMSON SCARLETT get on it. (MA) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, Alexsi Nurinmen, Toinen Linsa, 25 A4, 00520 Helsinki, Finland)

VIOLENT PACIFISTS – Noise / grind madness from Scotland. Forty tracks, most clocking in well under 30 seconds...but don't skip this one simply because you like tunes in your more generic tuneless thrash, because these kids have riffs for days buried in this blur of lo-fi blastbeats. I dare say that this VIOLENT PACIFISTS session might have been the best twelve minutes of my last hour. (WN) (40-song CD-R, lyrics included, everydaymadnesseverydayrecords.bigcartel.com, Graham 43 Craigard Rd., Dundee DD2 4PU SCOTLAND)

WARBOYS – *Man Alive!* – Pop punk without real sharp melodies. Also, the kind of rock'n'roll guitar leads that wouldn't sound out of place on a mid-career BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN record. There's a BOB DYLAN cover. I think my dad would have enjoyed playing this kind of music when he was a middle-aged man (he's now an old man), but he probably would've turned down the gain on the guitar and added some falsetto background vocals. (MR) (5-song CD-R, lyrics not included, mysteryschoolrecords.bigcartel.com)

(((WAX))) – *Out of Line* – Slow heavy metal that reminds me of MEGADETH meets ROLLINS BAND. Hardcore poetry with metal grooves. Late '80s thrash elements combined with early '80s west coast punk lyrics. Cool and simple, this is a solid skate rock tape mixed with some acid-casualty weirdness like early VIOVOD or early NEUROSIS, but is about holing up in a bathroom to collect one's thoughts. The sound of Kafka music. (JR) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, wax902.bandcamp.com)

XRDM – *Fashkodato* – Malaysia's XRDM plays fast, sometimes melodic, crust-influenced hardcore punk. Some of the more driving, fast parts with dueling vocals bring NAUSEA or even ANTI-PRODUCT to mind, while other moments incorporate blastbeats and metallic riffs that are more akin to recent crust / grind influenced punk. I could imagine if the late '90s-early '00s PROFANE EXISTENCE catalog is something you're into, you'd probably really dig XRDM. The tape comes enclosed in a cool cardboard slip cover with stark, political artwork. (BP) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, exitmusick.bandcamp.com)

X= – *Now You're The Planned Obsolescence* – Passionate guitar driven punk, AmRep-esque delivery with subdued hooks that bring to mind late '80s Midwest DIY punk that teetered towards the rock'n'roll end of the spectrum. Crafted and packaged with care (in a non-traditional envelope that caused me to lose the damn thing until a recent move, so sorry for the *long* overdue review), this band has several notches in their collective belt, and they are all stylish. The title track here is the standout, but it's good to let the whole thing sink in. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, exequals.bandcamp.com)

XVICOX / YBUTTEROY – Two intense Italian groups with chromosome parentheses band names. XVICOX does two short bursts and a TMD cover, and sounds like a melodic LOS CRUDOS. YBUTTEROY enters more grind and fastcore territory, cookie monster, sound clips and all. The whole program is over in five minutes. (MA) (6-song CD-R, lyrics included, xvicox.bandcamp.com, ybutteroy.bandcamp.com)

V/A – *Some Gunk, Some Junk* – Comp tape put out by the label d.i.h.d. The label specializes in lo-fi and noise, so that's what's on the tape. I know both lo-fi and noise are made by people in bedrooms with four-tracks, so I get why they go together, but they still seem like strange bedfellows to me, mostly because lo-fi is essentially cute and noise is essentially gross. Nevertheless, this comp fits together pretty well, except for the occasional rock song recorded badly (which doesn't count as lo-fi in my world). But, hey, it's a comp, so you can't realistically expect seamless perfection. Overall, this is intriguing, listenable stuff. Plus, Oakland's STRAIGHT CRIMES has a noise ripper on side A. (MR) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, dihd.net)

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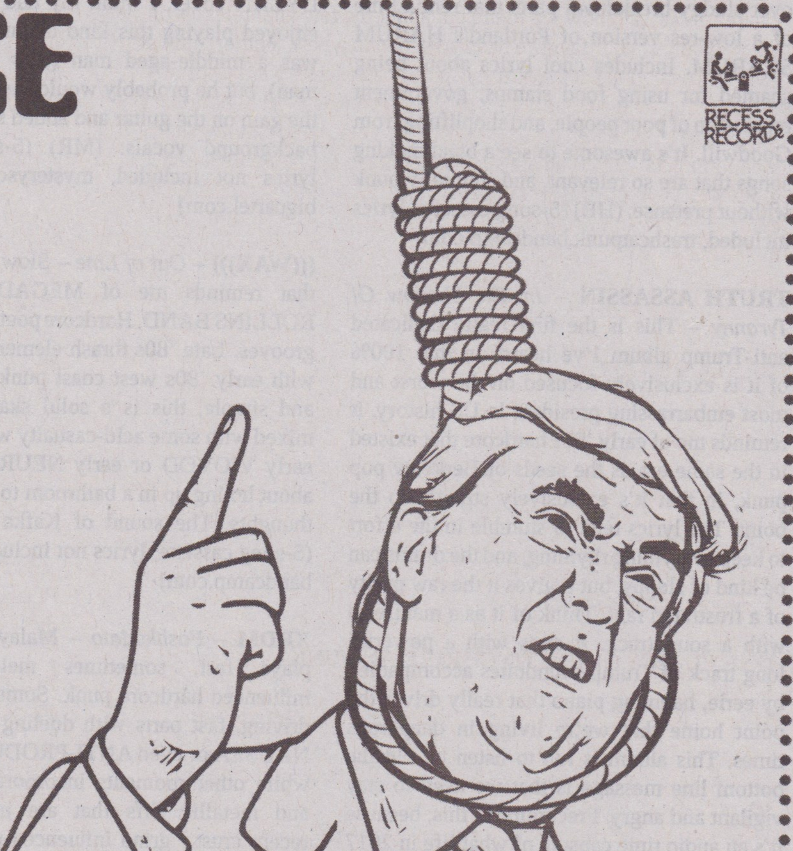

ZINES

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(JD) Joan DeToro
(KP) Kenn Pseudo
(MR) Mikey Minicomix
(RH) Ryan Hertel

FLUKE #1
$4 / 26 pgs

This is a reprinting of the first issue of *Fluke* from 1991, and it's fucking cool. I can see this totally becoming a thing and getting really old really fucking quickly, and maybe it already has and I'm late to the party again, but this look at what it took to get the word out is more than just a trip down memory lane—or senior citizen justification. If you're too young to remember 1991, you might get some badass "Oh, shit!" moments beyond comprehending punk life pre-internet, like "Oh, shit! People paid for half page ads to sell their $3 demo tape?" or even "Oh, shit! You dusty ass dinosaurs liked that funky bass in your hardcore back then?" Cool interviews with Fugazi, fucking Plaid Retina, and even Tim Lamb. Not every pissed punk placed on this poo-poo planet was in three dozen bands back then, so the reviews section is an appropriate documentation of what punks listened to, were excited about, and how we found out about the few vital releases of the year, and if your favorite band switched to a new, shittier, funkier style and started to suck ass. If this cut'n'paste fossil were just run-of-the-mill garbage from the era (which there was a ton of back then, believe me) this would just be landfill two times over, and not worth mentioning, but this is an apt slice of semi-ancient punk life without glorifying the past, and I totally dug it. A stick-it note claims this can come with a tape as well, but maybe mine got misplaced. Judging by their reviews section (I totally forgot how much I loved Swiz!!!), I bet it was something I would have played on repeat. (DZ)
PO Box 1547 Phoenix, AZ 85001 / Fluke.bigcartel.com

HANDGRENATE
18 pgs

I wish I knew German so that I could understand more of this zine that has a cool cut-and-paste aesthetic. A good chunk of the zine appears to consist of a write-up of '80s / '90s German grinders Brutal Glöckel Terror. There are a couple of show reviews (one being that other, definitely inferior Terror), record reviews, and a couple of other pieces that I can't determine the nature of given the language barrier. (DG)
handgrenate.zine@gmail.com

ONE PUNK'S GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN PUNK
$1 / 18 pgs

This writing originally appeared in *Razorcake* as part of their regular "One Punk's Guide To..." feature. It's mostly the author's personal history with Christianity, punk, and how he reconciled his understanding of his two belief systems, along with a surface-level history of Christian rock and punk bands that, in this case, catered primarily to a theist scene and fanbase (as opposed to, say, Circle One), and whose records were primarily distributed through evangelical outlets. Later on, he gets into the history of Tooth & Nail Records, which had a proselytizing agenda involving attempting to introduce fans of specific popular secular bands to the label's Christian approximations. As a piece of writing, I found it kinda boring and shallow, and there wasn't much about the evolution of his thought process or anything about why he is no longer a Christian. But I did learn some things about how some of this stuff works, and found it useful as an exposé to some extent. I'd recommend for anyone interested in how this shit plays out to seek out the article on Christianity infiltating Northwest music that appeared in the Stranger a couple of years ago. (DG)
welcometoflavorcountry@gmail.com

PLASTIC BOMB #100
€3.5 / 96 pgs

Fortunately, since I only know about twenty words in German, there are a shit-ton of clues and murder scene DNA to help me judge this zine and figure out what the hell they're all about. Billed as an anarchist music zine, there are a ton of interviews, including Peter and the Test Tube Babies, the Adicts, the two creators of the mag, Koloss Skateboards, and about ten other German-language punk bands. There's a giant, full-color, foldout poster commemorating the 100 covers, and a ton of clean cut bro bands' ads (yikes!). Judging by their artwork scattered throughout, as well as the free CD comp and 7" that accompanies the zine, it seems like these fine folks are mostly all about spikey hair punk, bedroom Oi!, 8th grade ska, questionable metal / hip-hop combinations and '77-style reenactments. This might sound like a dig (and it kind of is), but I'm a new superfan of an Oi! band that may or may not be a total joke: T(Oi!)letten. So killer! I hope they aren't totally racist like the last bedroom Oi! band I drooled over a few issues ago. A tour journal of a vegan romp through Barcelona, and a list of female fronted punk bands from the first decade of punk, which looks like it was pulled directly from the internet, but was cool nonetheless. Kind of all over the place and not terrible. *Ich habe schlimmeres gesehen.* (DZ)
Postfach 100205, 47002 Duisburg, Germany / ronja@plastic-bomb.de

PULL THE TRIGGER #3
£2 / 47 pgs

Hit or miss zine that is worth picking up for the high points, which are an illustrious interview with Sean "Fat Bob" Forbes (Hard Skin, Thatcher On Acid, and many more) that has him telling his punk life story, and a quick write-up detailing the job descriptions of hotel room attendants, which will hopefully inspire some readers to clean up after them-fucking-selves when staying at hotels. The Society's

room attendants, which will hopefully inspire some readers to clean up after them-fucking-selves when staying at hotels. The Society's Decline and Pizza Tramp interviews would probably appeal more to preexisting fans of each band, but the one with Negativ had a little more to offer to potential fans, and the write-up of various Northern Soul singles is a cool feature that will give me a playlist to seek out. Better than average record and zine reviews conclude this issue. (DG)
Kibourecords.bigcartel.com

RAMA EM FLOR
84pgs

This zine is mostly in Portuguese, a language I unfortunately cannot read, and while there were short portions in English my review is obviously centered on what my limited language skills could access—as well as the art and layout. This zine seems to be a collection of short written pieces and art by a variety of folks, with much of it focused on queer issues, abortion, beauty standards, gender-based inequality, and how women's bodies are portrayed. The art is varied in style but all very engaging and thought provoking. There's simple line drawings, pixelated photographs, collaged ads, photos with captions, poetry, and many other random forms of creativity crammed in these pages. I recommend this zine if you can read Portuguese, and it seems to have such a variety of views and formats on these issues that I know there is a lot to get out of it. Comes with a small collection of cut out black and white photographs of folks being sexy, which made this reviewer blush. (KP)
facebook.com/ramaemflor

SAN ANTONIO BOUND DEATH SENTENCE #1
$3 / 44 pgs

This is a really enjoyable personal zine by one punk named Kris. There are a handful of highlights that make this worth picking up. A retelling of a shitty (ha!) GG Allin show in San Antonio in 1991 is nothing you haven't heard about the man before, but it's entertaining nonetheless. The author's skateboarding (poorly) stories, some record reviews, and a book review add some fun personality to it all. A map of revolutionary spots in San Antonio points out some history I certainly didn't know and likely wouldn't have heard otherwise. The highlight and real reason to grab this zine is an introductory-level look at the Gwangju uprising and massacre in South Korea. If you're mostly unaware of the events and the US involvement in them, as I was, this will definitely be eye opening for you. A worthwhile addition to your zine library. (RH)
krisSATX123@gmail.com

TANDEM ZINE #2
free / 34pgs

Tandem Zine #2 is a full-color fanzine crafted with a lot of heart. The writer clearly loves the punk / skinhead / Oi! / hardcore / etc. scene of his home in the Philippines, and makes sure to cram in an impressive amount of material into this zine. We have interviews with a wide variety of bands—some still active some still not—including Thee Flanders, Oppressor, Dead Sperm, the Downsetters, and RDA. On top of that, there's a piece on the Etniko Bandido Infoshop, a Belarus Scene report, and a bunch of smaller bits on other fanzines, some records, and some opinion pieces (including a classic but good "fuck nazis" bit near the end, pertinent to Philippines). That being said, there's a lot of material and some of it is very ho-hum. I was not at all into the Thee Flanders interview, as there is no place for psychobilly in my heart at all, and the Dead Sperm interview felt much too bro-ish. But, the more I read on I was won over by the great interview with Chung de Vera of the Etniko Bandido Infoshop; his focus on the environment and approach about human rights was more than noteworthy. Also—and I know this is a dangerous opinion to insert into in this magazine—most scene reports don't particularly interest me, but learning even a little about punk in Belarus got my attention. I was also pretty into the tons of color photo reproduction of punks from the Philippines and the way this zine titled its ad section "Tandem Zine Ads." There's a lot of things happening in the Philippines (especially around the drug war) that are really important to know about and this zine touches on a bit of them here and there, and also just gives one good window into the punk scene there (though one very lacking on non-dudes unfortunately). (KP)
PO Box 3050 Quality and Patient Safety Department, Heart Hospital, HMC DOHA

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #150
$2 / 40 pgs

This zine has been going for 150 issues and will celebrate its 25th (!) anniversary with the next issue. Of note in this issue is the move of the founder and main contributor, Boone, from Columbia, MO to Des Moines, IA. This is very noticeable in the sudden jump of city between the live reviews / interviews. Check this out to be introduced to a solid handful of some awesome midwestern bands, including the Hooten Hallers. A full four pages are given to an essay on the Hurricane Harvey disaster and the inevitable second disaster of the media coverage and the public's reaction to it. It's worth a read just to get a level opinion, which seems like such a rare experience anymore. The record reviews and short essays are in a very charming and enjoyable voice as well, so this is definitely a zine worth diving into. (RH)
ttwn.blogspot.com / ttwn@hotmail.com / PO Box 1444, Columbia, MO 65205-1444

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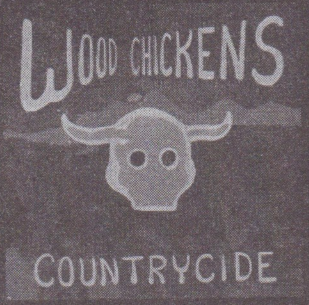
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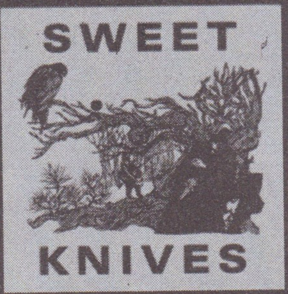
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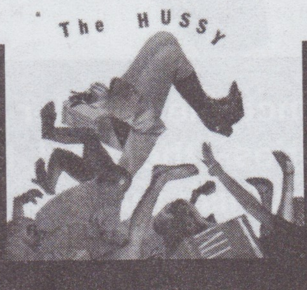

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But maybe you did. April 3, 2018 will mark twenty years since the founder of *Maximum Rocknroll*, Tim Yohannan, died. If you've got stories—the good, the bad, and the typically Tim Yo, we'd love to read and publish them.

No stories? No worries! We'd also love more high resolution photos of Tim. Background, foreground, we wanna see 'em.

Please submit to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com by February 5, 2018 to have your submission considered.

Note: No submissions from Green Day will be accepted.